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The life and times of Rev.
Finis Ewing

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THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

REV. FINIS EWING

ONE OF THE FATHERS AND FOUNDERS OF THE CUMBERLAND
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

REMARKS ON DAVIDSON'S HISTORY,

OR, A REVIEW OF HIS CHAPTERS ON THE REVIVAL OF 1800, AND
HIS HISTORY OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIANS.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

BY REV. F. R. COSSITT, D.D.

LOUISVILLE, KY.:

REV. LEE ROY WOODS,

AGENT FOR THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION OF THE CUMBERLAND
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P R E F A C E.

THE work now offered to the public has been long delayed by a want of definite information, with regard to some facts and incidents which were deemed as necessary to the justice of the subject as to the continuity of the narrative. In reply to numerous letters of inquiry, addressed to various persons in different parts of the country, many valuable materials have been obtained. But the most valuable and available information has been received, in personal conversations with those who could furnish it; and in these cases the invariable practice has been forthwith to commit to writing, read the manuscripts to the persons giving the statements, and, their accuracy being admitted, adopt them as reliable. For this purpose, the author has traveled much, conversed with many of the oldest members of the church, and been enabled probably to preserve much that otherwise might have been lost to posterity. It has been expected by some, that the biographer would also write the lives of the other fathers of the church. This he might willingly undertake, did not the difficulty of obtaining the requisite materials discourage the attempt. It is hoped however, that some competent individual, who is able to travel in quest of the necessary information, will soon undertake the task.

A continuous chain of those events, which marked the life of the subject of this biography, unblended with the history of his times, might doubtless have been more acceptable to some readers. But the labors of the individual's life and the characteristic events of his times, having been inseparably connected, justice to both seemed to require their simultaneous exhibition, in order to a just appreciation of their mutual relation and dependence.

With regard to the precept, "*de mortuis nil nisi bonum*," opinions are much divided. Always and strictly to practice it, would degrade the truth of history almost to the level of panegyric. The author has taken no pleasure, in pointing out inaccuracies in "the History of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky;" nor in exposing the unreasonable conduct of those who so bitterly opposed the revival of

1800; nor in arguing the unconstitutionality of the proceedings of Kentucky Synod, by their Commission; nor in remarking, however briefly, upon the *fatality** of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. These exciting subjects he would have gladly avoided, had justice to the church of his choice and the truth of history at all allowed. But in the west, Presbyterian writers themselves, in their great zeal to acquaint the world with the aberrations of Cumberland Presbyterians, and their extraordinary anxiety to make the best possible justification for the Synod of Kentucky, have imposed the necessity of attending to these unpleasant subjects; and so overwhelming is the testimony against their positions, that a writer, regarding justice, finds himself compelled, to place these matters in a just light before the public. For nothing in the history of Presbyterianism, as it has existed in various countries, appears to have equaled the stretch of power assumed by the Synod of Kentucky in their proceedings against the first Cumberland Presbytery, except the doings of the so called "Moderate Party" which previously and at that very time tyrannized over the evangelicals of the Church of Scotland, finally causing the exodus of the Free Church.

It is hoped however that attentive and candid readers will perceive that ample justice has been done to the mother church; and that her excellent institutions and praiseworthy efforts, for the enlightenment and evangelization of mankind, have been duly appreciated and acknowledged. In treating of the actors in certain exciting scenes, the writer has endeavored to preserve his mind free from that uncharitableness which would account for improper acts by impugning piety, wherever other causes could fairly be inferred.

This little volume is now committed to a candid public; and however the several branches of the Presbyterian family and other Christian denominations may regard it, before the excitement produced by the history herein partially reviewed shall have been allayed, reliance is placed in the impartiality and justice of posterity.

THE AUTHOR.

Lebanon, Tenn., 1853.

*The writer takes pleasure in recommending to his readers, a late work on this subject by Rev. H. S. Porter, D. D., Pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Memphis, Tennessee. This work shows whence this error was derived, how it was introduced into the Christian church, and ought to be in the hands of all who desire to know and love the truth.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Scarcity of materials for this Biography — Reasons of which — To what influences Ewing's youth was subjected — Early settlement of the Cumberland country — Gen. Robertson — Indian troubles — Brave defence — Engenders a spirit of patriotism — Chivalry evinced in later times — Provisions for intellectual and moral culture — Dr. Craighead — Dr. Brooks — Polemic society — Eloquence of self-educated men — What contributed to form Ewing's character.

THE materials deemed essential to the completeness of biography are often so widely dispersed, or imperfectly preserved, that ordinary diligence can scarcely avail to collect and embody them. Many are overlooked by the indifference, or lost by the negligence, of those who have no special interest in their preservation. Unrecorded incidents, however fondly cherished in the memory of admiring friends, pass away with those who witness them. The history of events, whose special results were not anticipated by those connected with them, is often lost to those who survive. And though there is an acknowledged relation between causes and effects, this is not always observed till the importance of the latter demands the investigation of the former. Hence, much that is valuable in history and biography is consigned to oblivion; and one generation often pays a high penalty for the neglect of those which have preceded. “For the fashion of this world passeth away.”

It was known that Father Ewing, in the abundance of his labors for the Church and the world, and the extensiveness of his correspondence on various subjects, did not keep a regular journal. It was hoped, nevertheless, that he might leave some notes or memorandums which would afford the desired aid to a biographer. But this hope has not been realized. Probably what was so familiar to himself may have appeared not sufficiently attractive to invite the attention of others; and whatever he had done or achieved fell so far below what he had desired and endeavored, that it seemed to him unworthy of commemoration. So true it is that modesty is found united with the richest gifts; and the author of the noblest achievements is the last who is disposed to herald them.

The writer of this biography is fully aware that in many of its parts more full and ample materials were necessary to render it as interesting and instructive as its noble subject would otherwise have warranted. But it is hoped any failure to meet public expectation will be ascribed to the right cause: the want of available materials, rather than suitable diligence: a misfortune rather than a fault.

Until a man has become distinguished, the events of his childhood are not sought after with diligence, nor preserved with care; but whenever, by noble attributes or actions, he has given lustre to his name, every incident of his early life, however indifferent in itself, seems to derive a peculiar value from the reflected light of succeeding years. Doubtless there were incidents

in the childhood of Ewing, which, when viewed in the light of his eminent usefulness during a subsequent period, would interest the many admirers of his talents, especially those who loved him for his works' sake. But, notwithstanding many letters of inquiry have been written on the subject, very little has been communicated to his biographer. How does it happen that so little is known concerning the childhood of one who stood as a tower of strength among his coadjutors in a religious movement which is without a parallel in America? How is the fact to be accounted for, that so many of those who regarded him as a burning and a shining light in his day, and who are even now rejoicing in the light which his genius has left behind, recollect to have heard from him so little of what personally concerned himself? The solution of the problem is as much to the credit of Father Ewing as to the regret of his survivors: he forgot himself, in his great solicitude for others. He could speak of his brethren in the most tender and affectionate terms, but seldom said any thing of himself. He could illustrate sentiments by the experience of other good men, but not by his own. He could hold up patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and above all, our Lord Jesus Christ, as examples worthy of imitation; but it was by his life alone that he was accustomed to instruct his children in the gospel: "Be ye followers of me." His was a peculiarity of disposition, just the opposite of egotism.

The influence of early training in the formation of character is indisputably great. Hence the wise king

enjoined, "Train up a child in the way he should go." But it sometimes happens, especially in new countries, that surrounding circumstances, passing events, and intimate associations, amidst which the youth is passed, constitute almost its only training; and from these the character of manhood is moulded. That we may more clearly see the influences to which Ewing's early youth was subjected, and be better qualified to appreciate the peculiarities of his character, it will be proper to take a brief view of the spirit, character, condition, and prospects of the people among whom Providence cast his lot.

The region usually called "the Cumberland Country," originally included that portion of Kentucky and Tennessee lying west of the Cumberland mountain; the waters of the Cumberland flow through this region, extending northward to Green river in the former State, and southward indefinitely towards the Tennessee, from which river the latter State takes its name. Although settlements had been effected in East Tennessee and Northern Kentucky, previous to the revolutionary war, it was not until near the conclusion of that memorable struggle, that "the Cumberland Country" began to be inhabited by the whites. The first permanent settlement was made in 1780, under the superintendence of Gen. James Robertson, whose merits had raised him from a private soldier to a general officer, and whose skill and prowess, in many a fierce battle with the Indians, had already rendered his name illustrious. The spirit of emigration soon brought, from Virginia and the Carolinas, many

families of wealth and respectability who, induced by the fertility of the soil and other advantages, made this region their place of abode. The prospect of a thriving and intelligent community, and the prevalent belief that this was destined to become a very rich and populous country, continued, from year to year, to bring valuable accessions to the settlement, and enlarge its boundaries in all directions. Nashville, however, continued to be the geographical and commercial centre, until, at a later period, other towns in Tennessee, and Russelville and Hopkinsville in Kentucky, sprung into existence.

But one cloud hung over these brightening prospects. The advancement of the settlement in civilization, wealth, and refinement, was impeded by an occasional inroad of the savages, who, not daring to appear in open day, nor to advance far into the populous parts, contented themselves with burning houses on the frontiers, murdering the inhabitants, loading themselves with plunder, and escaping by night. And frequently these marauding parties were pursued, overtaken, despoiled of their booty; and sometimes but few of the Indians had the good fortune to escape. The people of the settlement considered themselves competent to their own defence, especially after their victory at Nickojack, 1794; and doubtless but few things would have rejoiced them more than an opportunity of encountering the warriors of the whole tribe in a body, and putting an end to their struggles at once. But this was not according to the manner of savage warfare, which delights to keep up a continual dread and alarm, by cruelties perpetrated at

various points distant from each other. For what caution can always afford security against the stealthy tread, the noiseless approach of this lurking foe? What vigilance can ensure protection against his gleaming tomahawk or ponderous war-club, ready to cleave the head of the defenceless sleeper?

The men of the settlement were brave. They knew no fears for themselves. Their whole concern was for the defenceless women and children, with the tenants of some more exposed cabins on their outskirts. Even the boys emulated their seniors in the use of the deadly rifle: with this indispensable weapon and plenty of powder and ball, they deemed themselves in a satisfactory state of defence against "*the rascally red-skins.*" The slightest alarm would call into action, every one capable of using the rifle with effect. At the cry of "*Indians!*" men and boys were seen armed, mounted and riding to the contest, assured of victory or death. Never, perhaps, in any country or any cause, have men joined battle more courageously, nor sacrificed their lives more freely and disinterestedly, than did the defenders of innocence and helplessness in this new country. And whether they had an eye to the glory of their achievements or not, it is certain they bravely protected their homes and firesides, and, with inconsiderable exceptions, successfully defended the lives of their families and friends.

This state of things, while it excited a deadly hatred of the savages, united the inhabitants in the golden bonds of fraternity and friendship, prompting to that kindness

of feeling, courtesy of bearing and reciprocity of good offices, which mutual interests and common dangers are calculated to engender. At the same time it gave birth to a spirit of enterprise, a love of adventure, and a recklessness of danger, privations, and hardships, as unique in their character as honorable in their results. It did more. It inspired a spirit of patriotism which fired every breast and nerved every arm in defence of the soil rendered sacred, by so many mournful recollections of the past and cheering anticipations of the future, and, in comparison with the general security, all things else seemed valueless, and life itself not worth preserving.

This spirit continued to be cherished until, sanctioned by time and refined by happier auspices, it grew into that peculiar species of *chivalry* which so distinguished itself under Gen. Jackson in the Indian war, at the battle of New Orleans, and still later under Generals Scott and Taylor, in their recent victories. And among those who contributed most nobly to the triumphs of our arms in Mexico, the descendants of these sires are very numerous and deservedly distinguished.

As evidence of the prosperity of this new country, and the desire of its people for moral and intellectual cultivation, may be mentioned their early settlement of a minister, the establishment of a classical school, and the organization of "the Polemic Society" at Spring-Hill Church, in the vicinity of Nashville. Their attention was not so entirely engrossed by their troubles with the Indians, and the improvement of their estates, as to

preclude improvements of a moral and intellectual character. When they looked over their fields, gilded with grain or whitening with cotton, each husbandman could say, "the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places ;" and delightful must have been the thought of leaving to their children, "this goodly heritage." They knew how to appreciate their advantages, and even then may have augured what their posterity have realized. Certainly they felt as freemen ought: that virtue and intelligence are the surest safeguards of republican institutions. And that their children might be prepared for the duties and destinies which awaited them, they procured a minister to inculcate virtue, and an instructor to impart knowledge.

The choice of a minister fell on the Rev. Thomas B. Craighead, D. D. The selection was not altogether fortunate. This gentleman was a graduate of Nassau Hall, N. J., had acquired a considerable reputation in North Carolina, and was indeed a man of learning and eloquence. He was in good standing as a minister in the Presbyterian Church, at the time; and it is not known that any one presumed to doubt his orthodoxy or to question his strict conformity to the Calvinistic creed, until many years afterwards. Early in the revival of 1800, his piety began to be doubted by the friends and favorers of that gracious work; but, as an uncompromising opposer, and active leader of the opposition, he continued for some time to be held in great repute by his party. As he was, at the time, the oldest and most talented minister in the whole country where the revival

took its origin, it is not very surprising that Dr. Craighead's views of its character, although exceedingly prejudicial and perverse, should gain credit with those who had no other means of forming a judgment. Perhaps no individual exerted a greater influence in shaping the virulent opposition and subsequent measures, calculated to suppress so glorious a work. While a majority of the Synod of Kentucky and the minority of Cumberland Presbytery were affording the necessary aid and comfort to this man, in his unworthy opposition to the revival, they little suspected the grief and scandal he would eventually bring upon them. He was, after years of embarrassing difficulties, finally deposed from the gospel ministry, in the year 1811. In 1824 he was restored to his ministerial standing, and died, not long after, in the communion of the Presbyterian Church. His friends claim for him many amiable qualities, and his enemies award to him talents of a high order.

Rev. Dr. Brooks was placed at the head of the Seminary. He is said to have been a Presbyterian minister of some reputation; but whether his duties as teacher would not allow him time to prepare for the pulpit, or he had declined preaching altogether, it is not now understood. His name does not appear on a list of the ministers of Kentucky Synod. He is said to have been somewhat eccentric, a bachelor of middle age; but is represented on the whole, as a good teacher and a worthy man.

“The Polemic Society” was designed principally for the improvement of the young; but others of riper

years and superior intelligence, participated in its benefits. It was truly creditable to the young men, in a country so new, to fill up their intervals of labor and of savage warfare, with these literary exercises. It evinced a spirit to be admired, and afforded an example to be imitated. And doubtless that spirit and example — probably the first ever witnessed in Tennessee, west of the mountains — have prompted to the formation of many a debating club, giving impulse to many a youthful orator, and pluming many an unfledged imagination for its loftiest flights.

The south-west is believed to be more prolific of “self-made men,” than any other part of our country. Its character for eloquence, whether of the bar, the pulpit, or popular assembly, is for the most part ‘*sui generis*.’ And if occasional specimens of each are found somewhat deficient in correctness, taste, and dignity, their distinguishing characteristics, on the whole, confessedly are pathos, strength, and conclusiveness. It were easy to illustrate this sentiment by some brilliant living examples of men who, with but moderate scholastic advantages, have distinguished themselves as eloquent public speakers. But it becomes not a contemporary to chronicle their excellencies.

In a community of more than ordinary intelligence and moral cultivation; among men who, were already beginning to regard themselves as the founders of a noble State; on a soil the most productive, and promising to become one of the choicest garden spots of the west — but yet to be guarded by the unceasing vigilance,

and defended by the unabating courage of its occupants, against savage enemies — familiar, as the subject of this memoir was, with the dangers, privations, and hardships of a new country ; and sharing in all the bold and hazardous enterprises for its defence, was laid the foundation of a character, the portraiture of which will be attempted in the following pages. The state of things, but briefly and imperfectly described, was calculated to work powerful effects on a mind naturally vigorous, a spirit habitually adventurous, and a heart constitutionally susceptible. It could hardly be expected that a character of his native mould, and subjected in early youth to such training, could pass through the world without leaving its impress, and exerting some abiding influence on public sentiment.

CHAPTER II.

BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EARLY LIFE.

Reflections on God's Providence — Birth and parentage — Labor — Loss of his parents — Removal of the family to the Cumberland country — Settle near Nashville — Reasons for — His early youth — Rev. Mr. McSpedden's recollections — His defence of the settlements — Auecdotes — A Member of the Literary Society — Rev. Robert Bell's statement.

THE world's history furnishes many an epoch, remarkable for great events and extraordinary characters. And whether we account for their contemporaneous existence by supposing events originate character, or characters events ; it is certain that both are subject to the superintending and overruling providence of God. Omnipotence can never want instruments for the accomplishment of his wise purposes, whether of justice or of mercy. When an idolatrous and sinful world was to be destroyed, but a remnant to be saved, there was a just and perfect man who with his family were appointed to survive the catastrophe and re-people the earth. When God saw fit to establish his worship among his chosen people in a more imposing form than formerly, and the temple of Jerusalem was to be built, a king occupied the throne, who had the piety as well as the power to devote all his energies and resources to this work, according to the divine direction. When the time was

at hand, for the promised return of a captive people to their native land; Cyrus, though he had not known the Lord, who vouchsafed to his arms so many and so great victories, stood ready to favor the enterprise and fulfill the prophecy. When the corruptions of popery had reached the last point of degradation, and the Christian world stood aghast at its enormities, a Luther, a Zwingli, a Calvin, and others, were found ready to peril all things but truth and a good conscience, for the reformation. In the great awaking of 1740, in the time of Edwards and Whitfield, these great and good men with the Tenants, the Blairs, and others of a like spirit devoted their lives and labors to the advancement of this glorious work. And the wonderful reformation in the western country, usually known as the great revival of 1800, was ushered in and carried on, through the visible instrumentality of men, valiant for the truth, and not counting their lives dear for the sake of righteousness. Among this bright galaxy of evangelists, a portion of whom afterwards founded the first, if not the only, ecclesiastical organization of purely American origin, the name of FINIS EWING appears in letters of living light.

“They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.”

Finis Ewing was born on the 10th of July, 1773, in Bedford county, Virginia. Here his father and an uncle had settled, on their emigration from Ireland to this country, a number of years previous to the Ameri-

can revolution. The two brothers appear to have ranked among the most respectable citizens and prosperous farmers of that county. The elder of the two, Robert Ewing, Esq., was for many years the clerk of Bedford County Court, and an elder in the Presbyterian church. He married Miss Mary Baker, and became the father of nine sons and three daughters. The subject of this memoir was their twelfth and last child; and on this account, his parents gave him the fanciful name of Finis.* Both his parents were eminent for their piety, as well as their diligence in training up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Of his childhood but little is known. The following, from one of his sons,† is all that has been obtained, with which, however brief and indefinite, his numerous friends must be satisfied.

“I know but very little of my father’s early history; nor does my mother, at this advanced period of her life, recollect with sufficient distinctness to relate, with the requisite accuracy, what she may have heard. I believe, however, I am correct in saying, my father was raised on a farm, and with his brothers and servants was employed in the various operations of husbandry. I remember to have heard him say, he commenced plowing at so early an age, that one of his father’s friends remonstrated, saying he was too small for that kind of labor. Of his early education—I mean such

* A Latin word, signifying *the end*.

† R. C. Ewing, Attorney at Law, of Lexington, Mo., and late U. S. Marshall of that State.

as he obtained at the primary school—I have no particular information. I have often heard him speak of being at college, where the students had hard fare, hard tasks, and hard living; but I do not know the name of the institution. He had studied the Latin pretty extensively, and some Greek; but he did not profess thorough and critical scholarship in many branches of science and literature.”

Like Franklin, he seems very early to have acquired a fondness for books. It will hereafter appear that his varied and extensive reading made him emphatically a learned man, though not systematically educated. The vigor of his manhood, and the brilliancy of his success as a minister of the gospel, evinced intellectual endowments of a high order.

His parents having died in Virginia, the surviving family removed to what was then called “the Cumberland Country,” and settled in Davidson County, about six miles above the present city of Nashville. Their residence was not far distant from the Spring Hill Church, which seems to have been for some time a central point in the settlement. Elder Barton W. Stone, on his preaching tour “through all the settlements of Cumberland,” in 1796, speaks of “Nashville, which,” he says, at the time, “was a poor little village, hardly worth notice.”

Although these orphans had enjoyed the blessing of pious parents and much religious instruction, it is not known that any of them, at the time, professed to know the Saviour in the pardon of their sins. But such had

been their early associations, and such their cherished sentiments, that they desired the enjoyment of those advantages in a new home, to which they had been accustomed in the old one lately left behind. Their principal motive, therefore, in selecting this as their place of residence, appears to have been their appreciation of Church privileges, a good school, and a virtuous and intelligent community.

Though there is no positive evidence, there is strong probability that the subject of this memoir obtained his knowledge of languages, with some branches of science, at Spring Hill Seminary. For at an early period Rev. Dr. Brooks, an experienced instructor, was placed at the head of this institution.

In a new country, much harassed by Indian hostilities, but among a people moral, intelligent, high-spirited and industrious, the early youth of Finis Ewing was passed. Here his mind, naturally active, acquired the materials of its intellectual strength. Here his character, constitutionally enterprising, derived the germ of its future developments. Surrounding circumstances were calculated in no small degree to engender strong feelings, generous sympathies, and kindly affections: these, when sanctified by grace, directed by truth, and called into exercise by a revival of unparalleled power, rendered their possessor both persevering in labor, and powerful in accomplishment.

From his seventeenth year, the materials for Ewing's biography, assume a more regular and reliable form. Several persons now living remember him, as early as

1790, and afterwards; while he resided with his eldest brother, Robert, who has since been known as General Ewing, of Logan county, Ky. Rev. Samuel McSpedden, who resided at the time, in the same neighborhood, but now lives in Warren county, Tenn., speaks of him as follows:

“He was comely in person, graceful in manners, frank, kind, and generous in his disposition. He was more than ordinarily robust and athletic, quite fond of the usual sports, and well practiced in feats of activity. He was one of the faithful friends of his country, and ranked among those young men, who constituted the safe-guard of the settlement, against Indian depredation. He was considered a young man of fine talents, and extraordinary energy of character. He was very moral, regularly attended Church, and always appeared to give respectful attention to the services of the sanctuary.”

He is said by others, to have early distinguished himself among his youthful compeers, for his zeal and energy in defence of the settlement. He was always ready when called on, and sometimes was among the first to make the rally, on an alarm being given. Among the anecdotes, illustrative of the sportiveness of his disposition, as well as the spirit of his companions, the following may be given:

When called out against the Indians for the first time, he seemed much animated, and encouraged himself and companions by saying, “if so many good rifles cannot bring down, or drive away these poor wretches, we who

carry them, cannot claim to be men." One of the party, older than himself, playfully reminded him, that he yet lacked something of the stature of a man. He replied, "my stature will increase with years; and if your courage shall improve as much, you will be accounted a great man among us." At a subsequent period, after he had made some spirited remarks about the common defence, a companion replied, "Finis grows eloquent of late, when he talks about defending our women and children; perhaps he has an eye to the safety of a certain widow lady and her pretty daughter." "Exactly so;" said he, "and since all our ladies are so virtuous and amiable, and all our men so gallant and warm-hearted, I must contend that we are the boys to drive the cowardly savages across the Tennessee, who shall never tread our soil again." The allusion is supposed to have been made to the young lady whom he afterwards married.

The death of his pious parents was a loss not easily repaired. His brothers and sisters were, doubtless, kind, affectionate, and regardful of his welfare; but as none of them professed experimental piety, it is probable that their instructions went but little beyond an occasional moral lecture, prompted by their solicitude for his worldly interests and respectability. They are known to have been aspiring and emulous of intellectual cultivation; and in furtherance of this desirable object, would, doubtless, afford all needful encouragement and assistance, to their youngest brother, who was the favorite of the whole family. At the age of nineteen,

he was a distinguished member of the literary society, organized by the intelligent gentlemen of the neighborhood, with a view to their improvement in general knowledge, as well as elocution. This was probably the first society of the kind, ever instituted in the "Cumberland Country." How far Ewing and others, afterwards distinguished for their power in debate and glowing eloquence, were indebted to their early connection with this society, it would be difficult to determine; it is certain that most of them enjoyed no better preparation for speaking in public.

Rev. Robert Bell, one of the fathers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and one of its oldest living ministers, now residing at Pontotoc, Miss., has furnished much valuable information respecting the subject of this memoir. In his youth he resided in the settlement; and his statement is as follows:

"My first acquaintance with Finis Ewing was in the year 1792, when we met as members of the 'Polemic Society,' at Spring Hill Church, in Davidson County, Tenn. At those meetings I always regarded him as a young man of more than ordinary vigor of intellect."

CHAPTER III.

MARRIAGE, AND ADMISSION TO THE CHURCH.

Marries Miss Peggy Davidson — Notice of Gen. Davidson's services in the Revolution — Is killed at Gowan's Ford — His character — Monument to his memory — Character of the daughter — Inclined to be religious — Lifeless state of the Church — Both join the Church, being unregenerate — How accounted for — Craighead's preaching — His instructions to an inquirer — General character of Presbyterian preaching at the time — Ignorance of the gospel — Dearth of vital piety — Orderly in their conduct — Reflections.

ON the 15th of January, 1793, Finis Ewing was united in matrimony with Peggy, the daughter of Gen. William Davidson, formerly of North Carolina, deceased. In honor of this patriot of the American revolution, and in memory of his gallant services and lamented death during the darkest period of that eventful contest, the county first organized in the Cumberland Country received the name of Davidson: Nashville, its seat of justice, afterwards became, and continues to be, the capital of the State of Tennessee. The widow and family of the deceased General had removed from North Carolina, and settled in this vicinity. The husband and father had distinguished himself in his native State, among the earliest opposers of British oppression, had served his country in various ways during her struggle for liberty, and was killed in battle.

on the Catawba river, while opposing the advance of the British army, under Lord Cornwallis.

Savannah and Charleston had fallen into the hands of the enemy; Georgia and South Carolina, after many a fearful struggle, had apparently submitted again to British domination. No succors could then be afforded by the northern colonies. Cornwallis was advancing to the anticipated conquest of Virginia, where he expected to effect a junction with the British army to be sent from New York. The British confidently assured themselves that this union, with the co-operation of their fleet, which lined the whole coast, would strike the last blow at American Independence, and reduce the revolted colonies under the power of their oppressors. But Providence overruled otherwise. The indefatigable Morgan, and the brave Greene, though with too few followers to encounter the British forces in a general battle, were determined to harass them on their march, cut off their detachments, and, if possible, hold them in check till Washington could arrive and attack them with success. In pursuance of this plan, Morgan had gained the battle of Cowpens, with the loss, to the British, of nearly a thousand men, the colors of the seventh regiment, and all their carriages and baggage. And in addition to all this, Gen. Davidson, at the head of the North Carolina militia, had arrived at the Catawba, to oppose the passage of that river by the British.

Chagrined at the loss of the battle of Cowpens, burning with a desire of revenge and anxious, if possible, to retrieve the honor of the British arms by some signal

advantage over the Americans, Cornwallis made his way by forced marches to the Catawba, with the hope of overtaking and defeating them, before they could cross that river. But on his arrival, the Americans had already crossed; and by a signal interposition of Providence, the late rains had in the meantime swollen the stream and rendered the fording difficult and hazardous. The skillful Englishman marched and counter-marched, holding out the intent to cross at different places, in order to keep his enemies dispersed and compel them to guard the various fords at the same time. Probably having learned that the force under Gen. Davidson, at Gowan's ford, consisted only of undisciplined militia, he resolved to cross at this place. After some loss from the brisk and well directed fire of the Americans, the British army gained the opposite bank. Davidson had disposed his army to receive them; and the action commenced. But this gallant commander was killed at the first discharge.

The death of Gen. Davidson was universally lamented, especially in North Carolina, where his public and private virtues were so well known and highly appreciated. This action and the loss of the brave General was not without its value to the cause of American freedom; the army under Cornwallis was thereby held in sufficient check to enable Morgan, with his whole force, to retire untouched to Salisbury. To avoid a general action, and at the same time to annoy and weaken the enemy as much as possible, was the present policy of the Americans.

Davidson was a Christian as well as a patriot. His name is enrolled on the list of martyrs to American liberty; and patriotism awards to his memory the tribute of tears of gratitude. The Continental Congress passed an order for the erection of a monument to the memory of this brave and good man. But through the embarrassment of the national finances, the order was not carried into effect at the time; and it was neglected until the Hon. Mr. Graham, the late Secretary of the Navy, and candidate for the Vice Presidency, a connection of Gen. Davidson, became a member of the Senate from North Carolina. Through the influence of this gentleman, the order was revived; and an appropriation of five hundred dollars was made, for the erection of the monument, as originally intended by Congress.

At the time of their marriage, Mr. Ewing was in his twenty-first, and Miss Davidson in her nineteenth year. This young lady was distinguished among her acquaintances for her beauty of person, strength of intellect, and amiability of character. This is according to the recollection of several persons now living; and the impression of her virtues is so strong on the minds of some, that they become animated and eloquent in their description. Rev. Samuel McSpedden distinctly remembers her, and unites in the general voice of commendation. He tells an anecdote of Rev. Dr. Brooks who, although he never married and was no great admirer of the sex generally, yet acknowledged he had known two or three who came so near to what woman ought to be, as to give

assurance that they would make good wives : one of these was Miss Perry Davidson. When the wags of the day would rally him upon his inveterate celibacy, he used to express his views of marriage in the form of an allegory, representing the world as a certain inclosure ; women as so many objects of attraction, calculated to entice the other sex ; and men as rushing blindfold, choosing without much forethought, and repenting in long afterthought. And he usually added, “ if a man could be certain to get such a lady as Miss Davidson ” — and he sometimes mentioned one or two others — “ he might esteem himself a happy as well as fortunate husband.”

This union was approved by the families on both sides ; and acquaintances generally augured a bright future for the wedded pair. They soon after commenced house-keeping in the neighborhood of Mr. Ewing’s brothers.

At the time of their marriage, neither Mr. Ewing nor his wife knew any thing of experimental religion. Both were doubtless amiable, strictly moral, and inclined to be religious in their way ; but having never heard anything from their spiritual guides, on the subject of an experience of grace, they knew not that a change of heart was necessary in order to salvation. They had long attended on the ministry of Dr. Craighead, had frequently listened to the sermons of other Presbyterian preachers, but never heard the doctrine of regeneration inculcated or explained. The truth is, the Presbyterian Church, at the time, in that region, is acknowledged to have been in a lamentably lukewarm, and almost lifeless

state ; its ministers were formal and cold ; and but few of its members, as it afterwards became manifest, knew any thing of experimental religion. Much was heard from the pulpit about " the elect of God," but little or nothing about " the born of the Spirit." With regard to the character of Presbyterian preaching, in the country at the time, the report is almost universal, that its tendency was to a dry, speculative orthodoxy, leaving the heart without interest, and the conscience without alarm.

Ewing and his wife were now the united head of a family. They esteemed it their duty to make the God of their fathers their trust and portion, to honor him in all things, and to walk in the way of righteousness. Uninformed as they were, with regard to the essentials of Christian character, they seem to have been desirous of doing their duty, so far as it had been made known to them. They had certain ideas of their responsibility to their heavenly Father, their duty to domestics, and the importance of ordering their household in a manner well pleasing to God. They seem to have looked upon the preaching of the word, and the privileges of the Church, as means of grace, which, in some indefinable way, were to work for their benefit, prepare them for the wiser discharge of duty, and secure the favor of God. Therefore, without any suspicion of their natural depravity, or the necessity of regeneration, without any conception of the grace of God as it is offered in the gospel — further than certain confused notions of foreordination and election, which they had learned from

their spiritual teachers — they concluded to join the Church. They were led to believe themselves entitled to this privilege. They were the children of Presbyterian parents ; and their pre-possession was altogether in favor of that Church. Accordingly they applied, and were received without further ceremony, as regular members of Dr. Craighead's Church. Here they dedicated their first-born to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism.

It may be matter of surprise to the present generation, that persons of acknowledged intelligence in other respects, should be so ignorant of the pre-requisites for Church membership ; and that the Church itself should receive them without more satisfactory evidence of their piety. But this may be accounted for, by the great spiritual dearth, then prevailing in the Presbyterian Church, in this western country ; and those who will consult Dr. Davidson's History of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky, and other similar testimony, respecting the lamentable state of religion in that Church, previous to the great revival of 1800, and even among those who opposed that revival, for twenty-five years afterwards, will cease to wonder. Especially, when to this cause is added the character of the preaching and instructions, by Dr. Craighead and other ministers of the same Church, little better could be expected. Rev. Samuel McSpedden, whose parents were members of Dr. Craighead's Church, and had removed to this country in company with him, from North Carolina, states facts fresh within his recollection ;

and the unquestionable piety and religious intelligence of such a man give full credit to his testimony ; it is as follows :

“ I sat under Dr. Craighead’s preaching for fourteen or fifteen years, and never heard him advance any thing in favor of the new birth, evangelical repentance, or saving faith. And though his character for orthodoxy, at the time, and for many years afterwards, was unimpeached and undoubted, I now suspect he entertained, to some extent at least, a germ of the errors of which he was afterwards accused. His sermons appeared to have not the slightest tendency to alarm the consciences of his hearers, or to render them dissatisfied with themselves. On the contrary, his preaching seemed calculated to quiet the fears of the people and keep them from becoming disturbed about their souls’ salvation. There have been several instances of persons going to him, with burdened consciences, to obtain instruction, and inquire the way of salvation, who, by his soothing arguments, have had their consciences quieted ; and, returning without any internal evidence of a change of heart, have appeared afterwards to remain satisfied with their spiritual condition. Of one case I have a distinct recollection : that of a Mrs. Dean, a respectable lady and member of the church, whom I saw on her way to Mr. Craighead’s, at a time when my parents, who knew and sympathized with her, said she was in great distress of mind about the salvation of her soul. Mr. Craighead, it was said, told her, all that was necessary for her was to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God ; and

on her assenting to this truth, he soothed and comforted her, pronouncing her in the way of salvation. And though she professed not to know any thing of a change of heart, her conscience became quiet, and she remained satisfied, appearing to think she had experienced and done all that was proper and necessary."

Some idea of the general character of Presbyterian preaching, at the time and place referred to, may be obtained from another statement of the same venerable gentleman. He says, "during the fourteen years previous to the great revival of 1800, I heard the preaching of Dr. James Blythe, Barton W. Stone, John Anderson, (from North Carolina,) John Doak, — Caldwell, William McGee, and James McGready: the last named, once, most of the others, several times. The tendency of most of their sermons was not calculated to awaken much interest, nor alarm the conscience; nor did the efforts in general seemed designed to accomplish more than to inform the understanding. For I heard nothing on the necessity of the new birth from any of them, except from McGready and McGee, near the close of the period mentioned. If I heard anything like the doctrine of regeneration from any of the others, it was from Mr. Stone, who was at the time regarded an orthodox Presbyterian."

It is not surprising that the youth grew up ignorant of the spirit and power of the gospel, that many members of the church were strangers to vital piety, and that coldness, darkness, and dearth prevailed almost universally among ministers and people. It was not customary

then, as now, for professors of religion to confer and take sweet counsel together, with regard to their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, helps and hindrances; nor were they in the habit of seeking the sympathy and assistance of kindred spirits, whether rebellious nature or assisting grace might be predominant. It was not customary for Christians to speak of their spiritual concerns, nor to reveal their religious exercises; and those who dared to do so were sometimes ridiculed or censured for "*making a blowing-horn*" of their religion. Previous to the great revival, it was the fashion to discourage all such intercommunication. "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God,"* was perverted into a maxim, often repeated and generally acted upon: a perversion well calculated to repress inquiry and foster ignorance; surely contrary to the wise practice of those who, fearing the Lord, "spake often to one another."†

Whether Ewing and his wife were induced to unite with the church, through any direct influence or arguments of their pastor, is not known. From what Ewing once said to Dr. Craighead, at a subsequent period, in presence of the examining committee of Presbytery—"your views of faith, sir, once came near destroying my soul"—it is inferred that allusion was made to some arguments employed to silence the scruples of the latter, in regard to joining the church. Certain it is that Ewing and his wife were, in their external deportment, very orderly and exemplary members. In reference to this subject, Rev. Mr. McSpedden says, "after joining the

* Rom xiv, 22.

† Mal. iii, xvi.

church, Ewing was accustomed to take his place in the clerk's desk, give out the hymns and lead in singing. He was a very good singer and had a strong and melodious voice. Under preaching he always appeared attentive, usually solemn; and I have occasionally seen him much affected, even to tears. From the change in his manners and deportment, I never doubted the genuineness of his piety. But being myself at that time destitute of any experimental knowledge of the work of grace or the fruit of the Spirit, I supposed all the religion necessary or possible to be obtained consisted in breaking off from vice, practicing virtue, living an orderly member of the church, and walking uprightly as a peaceable member of the community. I would have thought it presumption and wickedness in me to doubt the piety of one, living in full fellowship with the church."

Formalism has been a curse to the church in all ages. It was no new thing for public teachers to lay a wonderful stress on certain external observances, to the neglect of internal holiness, purifying the heart and regulating the life; nor for a people to grow up, having a form of godliness, but denying the power. When this is the case, certain favorite doctrines usually assume an undue prominence, almost to the exclusion or entire neglect of others of vital importance; while that class of duties which may be found the most easy, agreeable, advantageous or honorable among men, will probably be preferred to those requiring mortification, self-denial, and sacrifice, however fully enjoined in the word of God. For this very sin, our Lord pronounced a woe upon those blind guides and

hypocrites of the Jewish church: "For ye pay tythe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, and judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." *

Nevertheless, it is matter of profound astonishment that ministers of good standing in the Presbyterian church, of any reputation for piety, talents, and learning, should be so zealous for certain points of doctrine which they deemed essential to God's sovereignty, that they "omitted the weightier matters" of man's free agency, accountability, and total depravity, the necessity of repentance, faith, regeneration, and sanctification, in order to glorification of heaven. That this kind of preaching was not peculiar to Dr. Craighead, but was characteristic of the other ministers who visited his congregation, with the exception of McGready, McGee, and perhaps a few others who were there a short time before the great revival, is evident from the testimony of persons who resided in that section at the time, and have survived that period. It is not easy to account for the prevalence, in any degree, of this kind of teaching by the ministers of a church, holding to the great doctrines of the reformation; but the fact being known, we are not surprised that many persons were received into full fellowship with the church, who were totally ignorant of their natural depravity as well as of any gracious work wrought in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

* Matt. xxiii, 23.

CHAPTER IV.

CONVERSION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

Ignorance of the truth leads to error — Satisfied with their spiritual condition — Removal to Kentucky — McGready — His preaching — Alarming to the formalist — Compared with Craighead — Ewing and his wife awakened — Communicate freely with each other — Inquiries — Difficulties growing out of wrong views of Faith — Ready to despair — The husband rejoices in hope — The wife comfortless — She finds peace in believing — Date of these conversions — Rev. R. Donnell fixes it in 1797 or 8 — A goodly example — Mrs. Ewing's services to the Church — Is now in her eightieth year — Lives to pray for the Church — Is waiting her Lord's summons.

WE have seen that Mr. Ewing and his wife had joined Dr. Craighead's Church, maintaining an upright and exemplary deportment. They were anxious to do their duty, so far as they understood it. They had no idea of the depravity of the human heart, nor of the grace of God which bringeth salvation. The work of the Spirit was wholly unknown to them. They had received from their spiritual guides certain indefinable notions of predestination, election, and effectual calling, as well as of the necessity of faith in order to make their calling and election sure. Nothing, however, had been inculcated on the doctrine of faith, beyond a mere belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This they had been taught by their parents from their earliest years; this they had never doubted; and now, as

members of the Church, as parents expecting shortly to dedicate their first-born to the Lord in baptism, and especially as persons giving diligence to make their calling and election sure, it is not surprising that they embraced this sentiment as the foundation of their hopes.

This young couple continued satisfied with themselves and their spiritual state, except when an occasional difficulty, or a passing doubt, was suggested as they read the scriptures, until their removal to Kentucky, which took place sometime after the birth of their first child. They settled in Logan County, eight miles from Russelville, near the Red River meeting house. Here was one of the Churches under the pastoral care of Rev. James McGready. This Church afterwards became famous as the place where were witnessed the first displays of the power and grace of God, in the glorious revival of 1800.

This devoted pastor, this son of thunder, as well as of consolation, was not one of those ministers who could suffer the people of his charge to continue in ignorance of the great doctrines of the gospel: the depravity of the human heart, the necessity of regeneration, the atonement made by Christ, and the necessary qualifications for Heaven. He was, strictly speaking, a Calvinist, but of a moderate grade, more zealous to teach his people the plan of salvation than the subtleties of a favorite system; more concerned about their sure preparation for Heaven, than their right construction of a creed. In his sermons he was accustomed to dwell with an energy and eloquence seldom if ever

surpassed, on the purity, spirituality, and justice of God's law; the reigning power, odious nature, and destructive consequences of sin; the freeness, suitability, and sufficiency of the gospel; the love of the Father in giving his Son a ransom for all, and his Spirit to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; the wrath of Jehovah awaiting the rejecters of offered mercy, as well as the bliss and glory prepared for those who obey the gospel of the grace of God. From the testimony of thousands it would appear that few men, of any age, have excelled him in power of description, whether his theme was the joys of the righteous, or the torments of the wicked. Rev. William Barnet, now deceased, used to say, "Father McGready would so describe Heaven, that you would almost see its glories, and long to be there; and he would so array hell and its horrors before the wicked, that they would tremble and quake, imagining a lake of fire and brimstone yawning to overwhelm them, and the wrath of God thrusting them down the horrible abyss." His genius, however, was better suited to the sublime than the beautiful, to the dreadful than the enrapturing. His learning was respectable, and as a reasoner, he was clear, concise, and conclusive. He was a heart-searching as well as a soul stirring preacher, powerful to detect the hypocrite and alarm the formalist; and his views of the duty of a faithful pastor leading him to scrutinize the groundwork of the Christian's hope, very many members of the various churches were constrained to abandon their

sandy foundation, and build anew on the rock Christ Jesus.

Ewing and his wife were not long in discovering a remarkable difference between their former, and their present pastor. If Dr. Craighead was more graceful in his manner, polished in his style, and pleasing in his address, Mr. McGready was more earnest in his delivery, irresistible in his arguments, and solemn in his appeals to the conscience. If the former appeared anxious to interest an enlightened audience by a masterly discourse, the latter seemed only intent on convincing candidates for eternity of the truth as it is in Jesus. If the former could win admiration by his apt illustrations, brilliant imagery, and flights of imagination, the latter could cause trembling of soul by his reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. If the former was a man of learning and a popular speaker, the latter was a man of God and a preacher of righteousness. If the former resembled Dr. Chauncy, of the great awakening in the last century, the latter would more fully compare with George Whitefield, of the same period.

The sermons of Mr. McGready soon awakened in the minds, both of Ewing and his wife, new thoughts and anxieties with regard to their spiritual condition. They heard nothing to which their minds could remain indifferent, or over which their consciences could slumber. The whole system of religion seemed to be presented to their view in an unusual form, and invested with a different character; but whether their past, or their

present instructions were the more scriptural and worthy of their regard, was a question which they were not prepared to decide. It was an absorbing question, however, which occupied their thoughts and investigations, during their waking hours. The soul's concerns and the mind's exercises were not with them — as with too many professors of religion at that time — prohibited subjects. Whatever concerned one, equally concerned the other. Having entered into the connubial state, in the very morning of life, with minds unsophisticated by the world's false maxims, and hearts glowing with the tenderest sympathies, it would seem that in them was realized the beautiful picture of the poet :

“ But happy they, the happiest of their kind !
 Whom gentler stars unite, and in one fate
 Their hearts, their fortunes, and their beings blend.

* * * * *

“ Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
 With boundless confidence.” *

To each other they communicated their inmost thoughts ; together they addressed a throne of grace ; and together they searched the scriptures daily. But inexperienced as they were, and with minds embarrassed by previous instructions, they were not unlike the Eunuch, of whom Philip inquired — “ Understandest thou what thou readest ? ” — and they might have said — “ How can I, except some man should guide me.” † Their present pastor was just the man to preach unto them Jesus ;

* Thompson's Spring.

† Acts viii, 30.

and though at first they had not been very much prepossessed in his favor, they now regarded him as a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith.

Their first subject of interest and inquiry was the doctrine of total and universal depravity; this in connection with the law, Mr. McGready used to preach with unsurpassed power and effect. Could this be true? They found the sentiment fully sustained by the scriptures. Next, in reference to the doctrine of the new birth, they began to inquire, like Nicodemus, "how can these things be?" They soon found they must yield assent to our Lord's own words. On these subjects, they had heard but little or nothing which required to be unlearned. But it was very different with respect to the doctrine of faith; here a prejudice was to be displaced, before truth could enter their hearts. They had been taught that saving faith consisted in the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; but their present pastor made a clear distinction between a mere historical, and a true saving faith. When doctors differ, what shall learners do?

The subject appeared intricate and full of mystery; it conflicted with all their previous instructions and settled opinions; and, to their grief and consternation, it struck at the very foundation of all their hopes. Knowing that God "desired truth in the inward parts," and praying that he might "make them to know wisdom,"* long and sedulously did they investigate this subject.

* Psalm li, 6.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not;” and it shall be given him.”* “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”† By diligent reading of the scriptures, patient self-examination, and humble prayer, they at length experienced the truth of these promises, so far as to discover that they were strangers to the faith of the gospel. They conversed together freely and frequently, and communicated to each other their forebodings of evil, resulting from the dangerous error into which they had been misled. They mutually confessed to each other, that they had joined the church in an unregenerate state; that they neither knew the Saviour in the pardon of their sins, nor the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. They had a name to live, while they were dead; they had “a form of godliness, but denying the power.” They now clearly saw they were in danger of losing their souls, unless God, for Christ’s sake, would have mercy on them. Sometimes, in view of their own sinfulness, the justice of God and the purity of his law, they were ready to despair; but they remembered our Lord’s declaration, that he “came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;”‡ that “Christ suffered, the just for the unjust;”§ that he was “crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.”||

Suffice it to say, that after many prayers and tears,

* James i. 5. † John viii. 17. ‡ Mark ii. 17. § 1 Peter iii. 18. || Hebrews ii. 9.

after many confessions of sin, and acknowledgments of the justice of God in their condemnation — while engaged in family worship, which this couple had regularly observed since joining the church — Mr. Ewing became filled with joy and peace in believing. Now a new page was turned in this family history. Neither the wife nor the husband, who had hitherto been of one heart and one mind, had imagined it possible that they could separate, the one journeying to heaven, the other left behind. While the soul of the one was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the heart of the other was oppressed with a sense of guilt and trembling, in view of the divine displeasure. It was not so even in Eden, where the first sin was committed and the first promise given: they who had together fallen, heard the voice of mercy, and together were comforted. But here, they who had ever shared each other's joys and sorrows, now, for the first and only time during their married life, found their spiritual sympathies, affections, and prospects, utterly at variance; the one rejoicing in hope, the other groaning in despondency.

But this state of things did not last long. After a few days, as Mr. Ewing was returning from the grove, where he had been praying for the conversion of one so dear to his affections, his wife met him, her countenance beaming with joy, and her heart glowing with love to God. She, too, had found a kneeling place, where her Saviour had deigned to meet her, and speak pardon and peace to her soul. The joy of this meeting, under the circumstances, may be better imagined than

described. Now "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge,"* had come to that house; and "the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep those hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." For they are not, like our first parents, under a covenant of works; but, like all true believers, under a covenant of grace.

The exact date of these conversions has not been satisfactorily ascertained. Some, with only a superficial knowledge of the affairs of the church, but remembering that Mr. and Mrs. Ewing were members thereof, while living in Tennessee, would without further enquiry antedate the time of their deliverance from spiritual bondage, by several years. Others, having often heard them mentioned among the first fruits of the great revival of 1800, seem to have taken it for granted that they were born again in that year. But Dr. Smith in his history states that McGready, as early as 1797, "began to see some of the fruit of his labors," in the congregation of Gasper River; and in September 1798, "the two other congregations under his pastoral care, also experienced refreshing times from the presence of the Lord." And, although the historian above cited goes on to say, "the whole work was stopped and the people sunk back into a state of darkness and deadness," in consequence of the strange conduct of Rev. James Balch, a minister of the same Presbytery, "who opposed the doctrines of Faith, Repentance and Regeneration, ridiculed the whole work of revival, formed a considerable party, and involved these young churches in disputation and

* Ephesians iii, 19.

confusion ; ” yet there is nothing in this or any other account to preclude the idea that Mr. and Mrs. Ewing were converted during these awakenings. Rev. Robert Donnell of Alabama, in reply to a letter of inquiry on the subject writes as follows :

“ In 1797 and 1798, there was considerable religious excitement at the old Ridge congregation, at which time my brother Samuel professed religion ; and my sister Sarah — afterwards married to John, the son of Col. Given — and several others of the family became deeply convicted. There was also about the same time considerable religious interest, at Red River congregation, where I think Father Ewing professed. I first saw him at my father’s in 1798 ; he was intimate with my brother Samuel ; and they both appeared to be very religious. I was but a boy, but such was the tenor of his conversation and the ardor of his piety, that even then I somehow received the impression that he was called to preach the gospel. ”

The religious experience of Mr. Ewing has been thus far presented in connection with that of his wife, because together they embraced, but afterwards abandoned the same fatal error ; together they inquired after truth, reading the same Bible, kneeling at the same altar and presenting the same petitions ; and alone with each other, united by sympathy of soul, they traveled from darkness to light. Their example is worthy of imitation, and may serve to rebuke those who, instead of being mutual helps, become hindrances one of the other, in the concerns of their souls. For the unbelieving husband

is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. *

But Mr. Ewing is about to appear in a new character. We shall find him engaged in pursuits in which his wife, however deeply she might sympathize, could not be actually associated. It will be proper here to conclude whatever is necessary to be said of this excellent lady.

Mrs. Ewing is still alive ; therefore the pen of eulogy which might otherwise be employed in portraying her many virtues, is necessarily restrained. It is well known however that, in the progress of the great revival, in the prosperity of the infant church which therein took its origin, and in the success of her husband's ministerial labors, she felt, and on suitable occasions manifested, an unbounded interest. Her hospitality and kindness of heart were proverbial ; and she seemed to think no labor or sacrifice on her part too great for the accomodation of religious friends and others who resorted to her house, for the sake of her husband's company or counsels. The many ministers, now occupying prominent places of usefulness, who have been gratuitously boarded, clothed and educated by her husband, would deem it unpardonable not to mention her unwearied efforts for their accomodation, her careful solicitude for their comfort and her great zeal for their intellectual and spiritual improvement. Should her biography ever be faithfully written, it will appear that she was the fit and happy counter-part of her excellent husband.

The writer visited this venerable lady in the summer

* 1 Cor. vii, 14.

of 1848 ; and her numerous religious friends and admiring acquaintances will expect to hear something concerning her spiritual state and prospects, in her advanced age.

Mrs. Ewing was then in her seventy-sixth year, but retained, in a remarkable degree, her native vigor of intellect. She considered herself a miracle of the grace and mercy of God, who, through the instrumentality of one of his faithful servants, had brought her to abandon a dangerous error, and embrace the truth as it is in Jesus. Her heart seemed full of gratitude to God, that she had been permitted to witness the glorious revival of 1800, and its no less glorious results, something of which she could see and hear every day ; and that she had been united with one who lived only to labor for God and our fallen race, and who afforded her so many opportunities of doing what she could in her humble sphere, for the same precious cause. "I can do nothing now," said she, "but it is still my privilege to pray for the church ; and for this I may have been so long spared." Though her husband had been much from home, engaged in the service of the church, she praised her heavenly Father's goodness, that no adverse providence, no disastrous event, no domestic affliction, had ever occurred in his absence. And notwithstanding they had been called to mourn the loss of three of their children, in these seasons of affliction her husband had been in the bosom of his family. It was matter of great joy to her that, with the exception of two, all her children had professed the faith of the gospel ; and she seemed to exercise strong faith, that God, in answer to

the many prayers of which they had been the subjects, would convert these two unbelieving ones. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come," said she, "then shall I leave this world of sin, sorrow, toil, and pain, and go to my home in heaven, where I shall see my Jesus as he is, and be like him." One who was present asked, "Do you not anticipate a happy meeting with those loved ones who have gone before?" Her answer was, "O yes; and it will be joyful, but nothing like seeing my precious Saviour: without Him heaven would be no heaven to me."

CHAPTER V.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

Study of the Bible — Progress in religious knowledge — Counsels sought — Aptness to teach — Is made an Elder — Leads in social worship — Exhorts publicly — Exercises of a called minister — Not made known — Inferences — Recollections of Rev. R. Bell — Of Rev. R. Donnell — Of Mrs. Ewing — Licensed to itinerate — Labors blessed — Approved by friends of the revival — Opposition — Arguments for and against — Reasons for not going to College — Continues in the revival.

Mr. EWING had been accustomed to read the scriptures from his childhood. While pursuing his classical studies, repelling Indian invasions, and prosecuting the objects of the Polemical Society, the Bible was his constant companion ; and it is said, he was indebted to that source for some of his best arguments and happiest efforts in debate. This was owing, partly, to the early training and habits of his family, and partly to a peculiar constitution of mind, which could not be content with superficial knowledge, but was impelled to examine patiently, until it could arrive at clear and satisfactory ideas, on whatever subject demanded investigation. Particularly after he became a married man and a member of the church, did he search for hidden treasures in the word of God, availing himself of the advantage of commentaries, and such other helps as could be obtained. Previous to his removal from Tennessee, he

had become somewhat noted for his religious intelligence ; and this may account for his occupying in the church, notwithstanding his youth, so conspicuous a position as the Clerk's desk.

Ordinary minds may be satisfied with mediocrity in their acquisitions. But there are minds of a nobler mould, not to be discouraged by difficulties nor impeded by obstacles ; and their excellence, however high it may reach, only stimulates to still loftier attainments. That the intellect of Mr. Ewing was of the latter character, his whole life affords indubitable evidence. After trusting in a Saviour's merits, and being justified by faith, he made the inspired volume, together with some theological and devotional works, his constant study. He now read and investigated, not so much to improve his mind as his heart and life ; not so much to acquire general information as to understand the precious truth, and make it the rule of his practice. His depth of piety and knowledge of the scriptures soon became so well known and justly appreciated, that doubting professors and anxious inquirers often visited him, to receive his valuable instructions and join in his family devotions. He was ever easy of access, unreserved in his intercourse, clear in his exposition of truth, pointed and practical in its application. Whenever a complicated case or question was presented, it was to be resolved only by a reference "to the law and the testimony." In this humble, unpretending way, he showed himself willing to do good and communicate, as became an intelligent layman and warm-hearted Christian. His

aptness to teach, at all times proper and praiseworthy, began to be manifested as early as 1798 and '99, during the outpouring of the Spirit, in the three congregations under the care of Mr. McGready, which may be regarded as the first fruits of that glorious work which succeeded.

Grateful for his deliverance from the curse of a broken law, and sympathizing with the sorrowing multitudes who were groaning for redemption from the same yoke of bondage, he thought it not only his privilege but his duty to do what he could for their spiritual benefit. The field was large, the laborers few. He had accepted the office of ruling elder in the church to which he belonged ; and probably at first, without the slightest suspicion that he would become a minister, he occasionally complied with the solicitations of his brethren that he would lead in their meetings for social worship, which now became frequent and were numerous attended. This prepared the way for his being urged and entreated by the church sessions to conduct the public exercises of several congregations, when no minister was present. As the pastor had under his charge three congregations, and was necessarily absent much of the time, laboring day and night, in the revival — “so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed” — compliance seemed the only alternative. Mr. Ewing soon found himself fully employed. On these occasions he would sing, pray, read and occasionally add a few words of exhortation. But it often happened that his few words, in his burning zeal for the honor of God and the salvation of men, were, unpremeditatedly,

extended to an address — or as his hearers were wont to say — “ a discourse, containing the most powerful arguments and pathetic appeals in behalf of truth and holiness. ” He was soon found to possess talents, hitherto unknown to others and perhaps unsuspected by himself.

It would be very interesting to trace the exercises of such a man’s mind, while under impressions to preach the gospel. “ A call to the ministry ” — the heart of a man being moved to the work by the Holy Ghost — is always a subject of special interest to the pious. With pleasing, yet mournful, solicitude, do we trace the progress of a subject of the divine call, while on the one hand, he contemplates the forbidding circumstances of his age, mean capacity, fancied deficiencies, worldly affairs, social position, family connections, the intention of friends concerning him ; and on the other, remembers God’s gracious dealing in snatching him as a brand from the burning, a world that lieth in wickedness, the value of deathless souls, the boundlessness of the Father’s love, the all-sufficiency of Christ’s atonement, the freeness of the offers of salvation, the exceedingly great and precious promises, and the Saviour’s great commission — “ Go ye therefore and teach all nations ” — while he balances in his mind his hopes and fears as each by turns preponderate, encouraging and disheartening occurrences, prosperous and adverse providences, the approbation of the righteous and disfavor of the wicked, the helps of the church and hindrances of the world, many resolves to obey and almost as many to abandon the presumptuous thought, the direct movings of the Holy

Ghost and the subtle insinuations of the grand adversary, self-distrust, yet humble reliance on divine aid, until grace conquers ; resignation prevails ; and yielding to the divine will, he exclaims, " here am I ; send me."

Mr. Ewing kept no diary at any period of his life. His reluctance to refer to himself or his own exercises of mind, as many do by way of illustrating or enforcing principles, has already been noticed. Had he left in any tangible form the results of his experience, while being moved by the Spirit to the work of the ministry, the church might have been edified by the exercises of a remarkable man who lived in extraordinary times, who entered the sacred office under the most trying circumstances, and whose labors were crowned with triumphant success. The workings of his powerful intellect on a subject of absorbing interest at that time, and of the greatest importance always, would be appreciated by many as a valuable legacy.

On this as well as several other topics of great interest to his biography, diligent inquiries have been made, but with no very gratifying success. It is presumed but little of a specific character is now known ; but from the recollections of surviving brethren and of his venerable consort, as well as from his twenty-third lecture on this subject, to be found in the volume lately published by the Board of Publication, it may be inferred that he had obtained a deep insight of the exercises of men truly " called of God as was Aaron."

Rev. Robert Bell, of Pontotoc, Miss., writes as follows :
" Having had no conversation with Brother Ewing on

the subject, I could only judge of his internal from his external exercises, in which he manifested a sincere love to Christ, and a deep sense of the inestimable worth of souls, by his solemn exhortations and fervent prayers that they might believe and live. He was remarkable for the clearness and originality of his ideas as well as his forcible and appropriate language. He preached the truth plainly, intelligibly, and energetically; and frequently after concluding the exercises by prayer, I have seen him pass through the congregation, singing and praising God. Under his sermons I have witnessed powerful manifestations of the influence of the Holy Ghost in comforting believers, and convicting and converting sinners. He always advocated the principle, that no one could be qualified to preach the gospel, however talented and learned, unless he had been truly converted and called. He often said an uncalled minister was a curse to the church."

Rev. Robert Donnell, of Athens, Ala., speaks thus: "His impressions to preach were strong, even while the door was shut; but as the revival of 1800 progressed, his convictions of duty continued to increase. When the door was opened by the old Transylvania Presbytery, he made known his call, and soon afterwards was received as a candidate for the ministry, together with Alexander Anderson and Samuel King: all three were afterwards licensed and ordained. A holy and heavenly influence generally attended his ministry. It is believed no pious person ever doubted his being "called of God as was Aaron."

Mrs. Ewing says, "His impressions appeared to be deep and powerful. When he first became convinced of his call to the ministry, his deportment was marked by dejection of spirits, and at times by uncommon solemnity. He saw that he could not now execute what he had designed for his family, his farm, and servants. Besides, the office of a minister appeared so full of responsibility, he said, he felt to shrink from it with dismay. He afterwards became more composed and reconciled to the undertaking. After he and others became licensed exhorters, and some difficulties occurred in the Presbytery on that account, in view of the destitutions of the church, the wants of the people, and the pressing calls for his services, he said, if forbidden to labor for God and for souls, he actually feared he would go beside himself. The alternative appeared to him to be, either to do his duty or be deprived of his senses. Through his whole life he was very unhappy whenever family afflictions or other causes detained him at home, and prevented him from discharging his ministerial duties."

The true minister of Christ will find in these few hints something in which he can sympathize, and may recognize "a necessity laid upon" the subject of them similar to his who said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."* When first under these impressions Mr. Ewing must have been in his twenty-seventh year, or older: the precise time has not been ascertained. He had an increasing family to provide for, a con-

* 1 Cor. ix, 16.

siderable farm, and a number of servants requiring his attention. His position in society was second to none, surrounded as he was by a large circle of attached friends, affectionate relatives, and admiring neighbors, some of whom regarded him as the instrument of their conversion.

By the recommendation of Rev. David Rice, D. D., he and three others were authorized to itinerate among the churches, as licensed exhorters. The people generally, and with respect to the favorers of the revival it may be said universally, recognized in his instructions the voice of a shepherd. All the churches which he visited acknowledged the importance of his services by more or less accessions. New converts were multiplied; and his pastor, other members of the Presbytery, and all who had witnessed the fruits of his labors, regarding him as one "wise to win souls," had no difficulty in recommending him to Presbytery for licensure.

But Dr. Craighead, Rev. James Balch, and all the opposers of the revival who now followed their lead and guidance, although they were compelled to acknowledge, however reluctantly, the young gentleman's talents, intelligence, piety, zeal, success, and promise of future usefulness, thought his licensure or even his reception as a candidate would be premature. They argued with some truth, that he had not quite completed all the branches required by the book of discipline. It was said in reply, that his knowledge of most of the branches was respectable, and his knowledge of divinity and the scriptures truly remarkable, for one of his age and

opportunities; that he had evinced a peculiar aptness to teach, and his labors had already been crowned with abundant success; that in the existing state of the churches and the country, his services were indispensable; and, owing to the scarcity of ministerial supplies, he could not be spared from the gracious work then in progress. It was added also, that his was an extraordinary case, coming within the exception of the book of discipline. The one party strongly insisted — the other as strenuously objecting — that he should abandon all further attempts publicly to instruct the people or conduct meetings in the churches, until he had completed those branches of literature required by discipline, and with which he was supposed to be unacquainted.

Mr. Ewing appreciated learning as highly as any other man, as his whole life proves and these pages will show. But there was not within many miles of him, at the time, a college or seminary where he could obtain a knowledge of the branches required; besides his whole soul was enlisted in the revival; and he could not, he dared not leave his friends, relatives, and neighbors, to perish in their sins, many of whom had manifested tenderness of feeling and concern for their souls. Must he take up his abode within the walls of some distant sominary, leaving behind all home interests and connections, the churches loudly calling for his labors, the new neighborhoods, where a religious interest had been awakened through his instrumentality, the families who looked to him for counsel and instruction, and the many individual friends and acquaintances, whom he had long

known as hardened and impenitent, but now saw subdued, trembling and inquiring, "what must I do to be saved?" In short, must he, for the sake of a little more accurate knowledge of certain branches of human learning, abandon the glorious work of God, which was extending far and wide in all directions—a work with regard to which the ministers of the same Presbytery were about equally divided in sentiment—which one party was cherishing and laboring to promote, the other opposing and striving to destroy? No: he could have left his worldly interests, had done so, and was still prepared to do so, at the call of duty; but he could not abandon a cause in which he fully believed, the glory of God and the salvation of souls was involved.

CHAPTER VI.

BY ORDER OF PRESBYTERY, ENTERS ON A CIRCUIT.

The great Revival — First Camp-Meeting — Work of grace extending — Petitions for ministerial aid — Laborers few — Itinerant Preaching — “Circuit” censured — Diffidence in view of responsibilities — A precious promise — Hutchinson’s relation — Hungering for the word — A traveler arrives — Joy — He is the Preacher — Prayer answered — Destitution — Preaching on Sabbath — A large Assembly — Solemnity — Appropriate discourse — Results — Other places — Renewed petitions.

As Elijah on Carmel’s top, being cast down upon the earth, with his face between his knees, earnestly persevered in prayer to God, for the blessing of rain upon the parched earth — bidding his servant “go again seven times” to watch for the sign of a gracious answer — even so Mr. McGready and his covenanted band continued their concert of prayer, at the morning and evening twilight, for the conversion of sinners in Logan county and throughout the world. In 1797, “there arose a little cloud, like a man’s hand,” in the conversion of a female member of his church — who, though in full communion, had never before experienced a change of heart — and the awakening of sinners at the delivery of almost every sermon; again in 1798 and ’99, “the heaven was black with clouds and wind,” in the work of grace throughout his three congregations; and in 1800, there was a great rain, in a revival unparalleled on the American continent.

People of all classes and from all quarters flocked to the scene, some prompted by curiosity, some by a propensity to criticise, ridicule, or condemn, and others doubtless by a sincere desire to be spiritually benefitted. But whatever might be their motives, many became awakened ; and of these, some returned sorrowing for sin, others rejoicing in hope. The introduction of camp-meetings afforded facilities for the entertainment of the people which otherwise could not possibly have been enjoyed. At this time, at Gasper river, where this great awakening first commenced, was held the first of this kind of meetings, which have been adopted in almost all parts of the United States, by different denominations, and in some parts of Europe.

Persons from a distance, when awakened or converted at these meetings, in every stage of the revival, carried home an irrepressible desire for enjoying the stated means of grace ; and soon they became importunate in their petitions that ministers should be sent to break to them the bread of life. But all the ordained ministers who were friendly to the revival, together with the licensed exhorters, could not, by constant traveling and preaching day and night, supply one-third of the calls made for their labors. While the glorious work was extending in all directions, the demand for ministerial labors was rapidly outrunning the supply. Certain persons in Montgomery, Dickson, Robertson, Davidson, and other counties in Tennessee, had regularly sent up their petitions at every meeting of the Transylvania Presbytery, since the work

commenced. The people of a newly settled neighborhood in the upper part of Montgomery, in particular, had made unceasing efforts to obtain the labors of a minister, at least for a part of his time.

Surely, if in any part of the world, it was ever necessary for religious teachers to itinerate, it was so in this region at the time specified. And if ever a church judicature was justifiable in sending forth good men, more or less deficient in classical learning, to instruct the people in righteousness, the Transylvania Presbytery needs no defence. When "the grace of God was bestowed upon the churches," his own people were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, the unconverted "were groaning for redemption in the blood of the Lamb," and the feeble flock scattered through the wilderness, were without a shepherd's care; it would seem that no friend of God and humanity would forbid men of acknowledged intelligence, strong minds, warm hearts, pious lives, and already distinguished for their zeal and usefulness in the revival, to travel through certain prescribed districts, breaking the bread of life to the perishing. But strange as it may appear, when Mr. Ewing, previously licensed to catechize and exhort by the Transylvania Presbytery, was sent forth to the above named counties in Tennessee, and laid off a four week's circuit, the opposing ministers became loud in their censures. Continuing to labor with very great success for several years on this circuit, and on that account, the scene of his labors having become familiarly known, "*the phrase, Finis Ewing's*

circuit” happened to be admitted into the minutes of Cumberland Presbytery, and the committee of Kentucky Synod reported this as one evidence that “the mode of transacting business frequently violates our rules of discipline.”

What else did our Lord when he went about doing good? and his Apostles, when they traveled from place to place, preaching the gospel? The Synod did not anticipate the agencies of the various benevolent societies, nor the happy results of the Home Missionary Society, nor did she foresee her own operations in later times, when her own missionaries would be sent forth to do the very thing which was then thought a violation of her rules of discipline. The committee of Synod who reported “the phrase, *Finis Ewing’s circuit*,” as worthy of censure, had they lived till now, might have learned that a Presbytery violates no rules of discipline by sending missionaries to the destitute. But “*circuit*” may have seemed then, as it doubtless would now to some persons, to be a borrowed term, and consequently, uncanonical. Words, with some, seem to outweigh ideas.

We may imagine the feelings and reflections of Mr. Ewing, on receiving this appointment. Hitherto he had much enjoyed the comforts of home, the delights of the family circle, the sympathy of Christian friends, and the counsel of experienced ministers. His labors had been principally confined to those congregations and neighborhoods where the revival had already entered, his position and character well known, his usefulness duly appreciated; and whenever attacks had been made on

the good cause, by bigots, errorists or infidels, able champions of truth and holiness were at hand to repel them. But now all these blessings and encouragements were to be forsaken. He was to lay off a circuit of four weeks, within a district, a large portion of which had scarcely been redeemed from its wilderness state, the savages having but recently left it, and still in a friendly manner passing and re-passing through it. He was to proclaim a Saviour's dying love to utter strangers, not knowing how his message would be received or himself treated. And it afforded him no very high satisfaction that his field of labor covered that part of Davidson county which had been the scene of his early associations: though he expected to find many friends and companions of his early youth, he had reason to apprehend much opposition from his former pastor, who still retained a moiety of his waning influence.

The business of itinerant preaching had been but little practiced by his denomination, before the revival commenced; his was probably the first regular circuit, with appointments for preaching once, twice, or three times every day, which had ever been organized in the county by a Presbyterian. The dense forests tangled with undergrowth, the almost impassable roads, indicated by marked trees, the unfordable streams with miry banks, the log cabins with dirt floors, the strawbeds with puncheon pillows, the coarse fare of jerked venison and corn bread, and the uncouth manners of the honest settlers, did not disturb him so much as his sense of the responsibilities of the undertaking, his insufficiency for its duties and

the danger, lest by incompetency or oversight, he should bring peril upon souls or reproach on the cause he loved. When his field of labor was made known to him, and his plan of operations began to be considered, he appeared not like one on whom had been conferred an important office, but like one who had been subjected to an insupportable burden. It is said, he passed a sleepless, a prayerful night, but arose in the morning, rejoicing exceedingly in the ever blessed promise—"I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." *

James Hutchinson, Esq., of Montgomery county, Tenn., well known and highly respected as an excellent citizen, Christian, magistrate, lecturer on temperance, and promoter of every good work, has furnished much information respecting Mr. Ewing's labors and the revival which followed, particularly the organization of the church of which he became an elder. This gentleman has departed this life; but the writer visited him a few years ago, received from his lips and penned in his presence, the facts about to be related. And as those who were intimately acquainted with Mr. Hutchinson, have admired his warmth of manner, artlessness of expression, and aptness of description, his characteristic style will be preserved, as far as may be consistent with brevity and accuracy. His narration is substantially as follows:

We emigrated from Virginia in 1796, and settled where we now live, in 1797. Both my Sarah and I had been religiously raised and accustomed to read our Bible. Away from all our friends, and in this then

* Matt. xxviii, 20.

solitary place, we felt that we needed an almighty Protector. We sought the one thing needful as for goodly pearls. In 1800, we trust we both embraced that holy religion which has been our guide and comfort up to the present hour. The country was filling up rapidly ; but there was no one to break to us the bread of life. O, how we did long to hear the blessed gospel preached ! We joined with David Beaty and Henry Anderson in a petition, praying the Transylvania Presbytery to send us a preacher. We were rejoicing in hope, but hungering for the word of God. We were Presbyterians, so far as we understood ourselves, and wanted to cast our lot with that people among whom God was carrying on his glorious work. The field was wide, the harvest plenteous, and the laborers few : a preacher could not come to us. We wept, we mourned, we prayed ; but we could take no denial. We petitioned again without success. Still we believed God would hear and help us. We could not be discouraged, seeing that God could, in answer to our prayers, incline the Presbyters to favor us, if only a little. No mortal man can conceive our anxieties, unless he has been placed in a like situation. We could hear of other places within ten, twenty, and thirty miles, where the people, like us, were petitioning for a preacher : some of them had attended the great meetings in Kentucky, or higher up in Tennessee, and returned glorifying God. We asked, would not a God of love take care of his own cause, and feed his own flock, however feeble, few, or scattered abroad ? We called to mind his precious promises, and

said, he surely will. He is a God of truth, a righteous Sovereign, and has all power. With this we were comforted, and began confidently to look forward to the blessed day, when we should hear the gospel's joyful sound.

There are two periods of my life which I never can forget, while I remember any thing: one is, when I found the Lord precious; the other is, when in answer to all our prayers, he sent his faithful servant to minister to our spiritual necessities. I often call to mind, as if it were but yesterday, the evening when a traveler as I supposed, an entire stranger, rode up to my log cabin. This house built of rock, was not here then. His eyes were red with weeping; and the tears seemed scarcely dried on his cheeks. He inquired for James Hutchinson. On being informed that I was the man, he seemed overjoyed. He said, "I have so long traveled this Indian path without seeing a house, that I seriously feared it would be my lot to lie out this night, and take my chance with the wolves. I have cried and prayed to the Lord, as my helper; and now after sunset, faint, weary, and disconsolate, he has brought me to this hospitable home."

I was filled with surprise and joy. I saw he was a man of genteel appearance, prepossessing manners; and better still, his language savored of grace and piety. I had seen but few religious persons since I professed; and I greatly rejoiced, that a pious traveler had done me the favor to call and spend a night with me at my cabin in this wilderness. A little further conversation

convinced me, that the supposed traveler was indeed a very pious man. He soon took occasion to let me know his business in these parts, and that his name was Finis Ewing. We had heard of him. I saw at once that he was the young preacher, sent by Transylvania Presbytery to instruct us in righteousness, and feed spiritually the few poor sheep, straying in the wilderness without a shepherd. Sarah! Sarah! I called. She was out, preparing supper. Stepping to the door, I said, the preacher has come! Sarah came in, shouting; while I was crying for joy. God had answered our prayers, and sent us a preacher!

When we had become a little composed, Mr. Ewing modestly observed, "Do not mistake me, my friends: I am not a preacher, but have been sent in the place of one. I am authorized publicly to exhort, expound the scriptures, and, according to my ability, give all needful instructions, without the formalities of a sermon." We cared but little for the formalities of a sermon. Instruction was what we wanted. Being mere babes in Christ, we wanted some one to expound unto us the way of God more perfectly. And the more we conversed with this good man, the more we admired his spirit of humility, strength of mind, and knowledge of divine things. We were soon convinced that he had grace and gifts to be all to us, and do every thing for us that a regular preacher could.

We had long felt that we were in the midst of a people who were living without hope and without God in the world, actually perishing for the lack of know-

ledge. Without the gospel, without schools, and almost without a Sabbath, we shuddered at the thought of raising our children in such a state of society. The new comers were honest, industrious, and friendly; but most of them seemed as little regardful of religion and its duties as the heathen. We needed schools for the young, and the gospel for all. Hence we had petitioned Presbytery and prayed to God. Our prayers were now answered. We felt we never could be grateful enough to our heavenly Father, nor do enough for this his servant, who had left friends, family, and home, to show unto us the way of salvation.

Mr. Ewing arrived on Thursday night. I mounted my horse on Friday morning, and spent nearly two days in giving circulation to an appointment for meeting, on the ensuing Sabbath, at the house of David Beaty. I rode through the settlements on Cumberland and Red rivers, and the region about Clarkesville. Others also exerted themselves to good effect. Saints and sinners appeared to take great interest, since preaching, especially by a Presbyterian, was a novel occurrence. Many persons had never attended meeting, or heard a sermon, since they came to the country.

On arriving at the place of meeting, Mr. Ewing was astonished at the size of his congregation. He could not imagine from whence so many people could assemble in this new country. On coming to the settlement, he had traveled for a considerable distance along the old Indian trail, and supposed the country nearly destitute of white inhabitants. In this he was mistaken. Besides, the people

had heard of the great work which had commenced in Logan county, and was extending all over the country. Some had witnessed more or less of its effects. Their curiosity was excited, when they learned that one of those who had turned the world upside down, had come hither also. Some were impressed with the necessity of religion, and ardently desired to hear the words of eternal life. Some only cared to hear what this babbler would say. Several gentlemen of wealth and intelligence were present, who were known to be infidels. There were many others who, whatever might be their sentiments, were by no means friendly to religion. The truth is, nearly all seemed eager in the pursuit of wealth. But the people of all ages, classes, and of both sexes, for many miles around, who could get to the place, were there. No circumstance or event had ever before called together so large an assemblage.

A stand for the speaker had been placed in the piazza which, with the house and a large space in front, were full of people. Mr. Ewing retired for a short time, as I afterwards learned was his invariable custom, to wrestle in prayer for divine aid. He entered the stand with that solemnity and awe which seemed at once to disarm prejudice and destroy indifference. He seemed impressed with a deep sense of his responsibility and the value of the souls, for whose salvation he was now about to make his first effort. Whatever his learning, talents, or the character of his discourse might prove to be, all must have been convinced he was a man of God.

His subject was well chosen and ingeniously treated.

Indeed it did appear that no discourse could have been better adapted to the state and wants of his hearers. It was truly encouraging and comforting to the hearts of the few Christians, but terribly alarming to the consciences of the unconverted. It left no ground for the infidel to stand on. It showed the inseparable connection between sin and misery, holiness and happiness ; the suitableness of the gospel to man's fallen condition ; the extreme folly, vile ingratitude, and abominable wickedness of those who rejected the offers of mercy ; and concluded with a very appropriate application and affectionate appeal, calculated to subdue the proudest spirits and humble the stoutest hearts. Solemnity was depicted on every countenance in the congregation. Many eyes were filled with tears. Many who had come to laugh, returned weeping. Many who had been prompted by a vain curiosity, were awakened to an interest in the gospel of their salvation. Abundant evidence has since been given that several stubborn sinners were for the first time seriously alarmed, and a few confirmed infidels awfully shaken, by that discourse. From appearances I then believed it ; but now I know it. I thought, I saw undoubted evidence that God was about to revive his work among us, and cause this wilderness and solitary place to bud and blossom as the rose. I thank God, that I have since witnessed it.

I and several others accompanied Mr. Ewing to some other places, where he held meetings and proposed to continue stated appointments. The same interest was manifested, and similar results realized. And from what

I then heard and all I have since learned, I am satisfied that the meeting I have described, is but a specimen of the meetings in general throughout the district. Some were much more favorable in their effects. It was however the time of seed-sowing; the time of reaping had not yet come. And though there were many awakenings and some conversions, this season, there were not those wonderful displays of divine power and grace which afterwards attended the preaching of the same minister. Still a preparatory work was evidently in progress; prejudice was broken down, infidelity was abashed, irreligion was hiding its head, erroneous opinions and practices abandoned; while the establishment of schools and the observance of the Sabbath were topics of interest, and improvements now demanded throughout the community. Had the labors of Mr. Ewing never accomplished any thing in these counties, beyond the results of this season, his name would have lived and his memory have been cherished by many grateful hearts.

Several congregations in this district which had been collected by Mr. Ewing, but not yet duly organized, sent a petition to the Presbytery, praying that he might be ordained, permitted to return, and serve them as their minister.

CHAPTER VII.

REJECTION, ITS CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCES.

Dr. Rice's recommendation — Smith's account — Rice's report — Rejection — Dissatisfaction — Comparisons — Believers mourn — Errorists rejoice — A man of blood — Contest in defence of a Brother — Is victorious — Unclerical but justifiable — Petitions granted — Licensure.

IN the two last chapters, Mr. Ewing's personal history was carried forward to the time of his licensure, unblended with the proceedings of Presbytery, except by some slight allusions; in order that his preparations for usefulness and connection with the revival might appear in due sequence, it is necessary now to review part of this period of his life in connection with the circumstances and events which, besides those already noticed, for a time obstructed his entrance into the ministry.

Allusion has already been made to the recommendation of Dr. Rice. Smith's History of the Christian Church, narrating the events of the great revival, gives the following account of the matter.*

“ But the field soon became so extensive, that it was impossible for these men to supply one-third of their congregations with the means of grace. While they

* Pp. 580, 581, and 582.

were in this condition, the Rev. David Rice, at that time the most aged Presbyterian minister in Kentucky, who was then a member of the same Presbytery with themselves, though not a resident of the county in which the revival prevailed, attended a sacramental meeting with the revival ministers in one of the vacant congregations; and being informed of the destitute state of most of the churches, and the pressing demands for the means of grace, earnestly recommended that they should choose from among the laity, some men who appeared to possess talents and a disposition to exercise their gifts publicly, to preach the gospel, although they might not have acquired that degree of education required by the book of discipline.

“This proposition was cordially approved of by both preachers and people, who could discover no means of being supplied with the preaching of the gospel, unless they applied for the ministrations of those who belonged to other denominations. What still more clearly convinced them of the propriety of this measure was, that in almost every congregation that had been blessed with the outpourings of the Holy Spirit, there were one or more intelligent and spiritual men, whose gifts in exhortation had already been honored by the Head of the Church in awakening, and converting precious souls. Accordingly three* zealous, intelligent, and influential members of the church, viz: Alexander Anderson, Finis Ewing, and Samuel King, were encouraged by

*Dr. Davidson, in his history of the Church, says four, and adds the name of Ephraim McLean, improperly spelled McClain.

the revival ministers to prepare written discourses, and to present themselves before the Transylvania Presbytery at its session in October, 1801. All these persons had previously been under serious impressions that it was their duty to devote themselves to the ministry; but as they had not enjoyed the advantage of a collegiate education, and were men of families, and somewhat advanced in life, they had been laboring under difficulties on account of their not possessing the literary attainments required by the discipline of the church, and which, circumstanced as they were, it was utterly impossible to obtain."

"At the meeting of the Transylvania Presbytery in October, 1801, the case of these brethren was brought before that body, from some of whom they met with warm opposition. However, after a protracted discussion, it was agreed by the majority that they might be permitted to read their discourses to Mr. Rice, privately, who reported favorably. They were not at that time received as candidates for the ministry, but were licensed to catechize and exhort in the vacant congregations, and directed to prepare other discourses to be read at the next sessions of Presbytery, at which Mr. Anderson was received as a candidate, by a majority of one vote, the others by a majority of one vote were not received, but continued as catechists. In the fall of 1802, they were all licensed as probationers for the holy ministry, having adopted the confession of faith of the Presbyterian Church, with the exception of the idea of fatality, which they believed was taught in that book

under the high and mysterious doctrine of election and reprobation."

When it became generally known, that these young men had not been received by Presbytery, as candidates for the ministry, the public who had witnessed and approved their labors, expressed great surprise. The people of different congregations and neighborhoods, who had been blessed by their labors, and loved them for their work's sake, could scarcely restrain their indignation. Some individuals, both in and out of the church, were not sparing of censure. It was inquired, [cannot God call in the Presbyterian, as well as other churches, men who have not been educated at College? Cannot Presbyterians, if truly converted and called, preach as well, and be blessed as abundantly as others? Are not these young men even now more efficient in their labors, more instructive in their discourses, and more blessed in their ministrations with the influences of the Spirit, than those by whose votes they have been rejected?] Do not their appointments call out overflowing congregations, while but few care to listen to the cold-hearted and drowsy-headed, sapless sermons of their opposers. While these exhorters declare, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, the simple truths of the gospel, when have we heard these blessed doctrines explained and urged by some old preachers who claim to be very wise and thoroughly learned? While, through the instrumentality of our young friends, many have professed to embrace Christ as he is offered in the gospel, who has ever heard of a single soul

convicted or converted through the instrumentality of Craighead, Balch, or their party?

This was rather a home-thrust, and probably too severe, against some of the anti-revivalists. The refusal to license these men occasioned comparisons to be made and sentiments expressed, which otherwise might have been withheld. Particularly in the case of Mr. Ewing, was the course of the majority seriously regretted and severely censured. Few were willing to believe, that he was so deficient in education as to justify the conduct of the majority. Smith, the historian before referred to, who had the fullest opportunities of knowing the truth of his statement, testifies in a note appended to his work: "Mr. Ewing is a man of liberal education, and extensive reading."

However the friends of the revival, and the sober, reflecting part of the community, might disapprove, there were not wanting infidels, errorists, and worldly-minded men to applaud the course of the majority: so true it is that error has no love for truth, and the spirit of the world is at enmity against the spirit of Christ. It was even said by some that this enthusiasm ought to be put down, and these young men not allowed to travel through the country, frightening people out of their wits, and alarming old and young with unnecessary fears. And of certain old members of the church, who had exchanged their dead formality for a living faith—abandoning their works of righteousness for the grace of God which bringeth salvation—it was said, they had religion enough before, as much as any man ought

to have, or decent men ought to want; and to alarm the fears, and disturb the peace of such persons, was downright wickedness.

While this subject was under discussion in the community, Mr. Ewing uttered no complaint. He continued his humble labors as if nothing unpleasant had happened, enjoying the confidence and love of all evangelical Christians. His friends, however, could not be so easily satisfied, and insisted on knowing why his case was so unexpectedly disposed of? The first answer obtained was, "*He is a man of blood.*" This was received with profound astonishment. Can it be possible that the talented, gentle, and devoted Ewing is a man of blood? We have known him from early youth to have been robust and active, brave and spirited; but can it be possible that he has at any time imbued his hands in the blood of a fellow creature? The next answer was, "very lately, within the last month, he engaged in boxing with a notorious bully, who left the ground, bleeding and vanquished." This, if true, was admitted to be a sufficient justification for the majority. But was it true? Were there no extenuating or even justifying circumstances?

The following is substantially the statement of Rev. Thomas Calhoun, Rev. Samuel McSpedden, and others, which will exhibit the affair in its true light, and fully vindicates the character of Mr. Ewing:

Hearing that his brother, the sheriff of an adjoining county, was lying at the point of death, Mr. Ewing visited him. He found him convalescent, though still

feeble and emaciated. A precept was brought to the sheriff, requiring him to apprehend and lodge in jail, a certain fugitive from justice, who had returned, and was secreted in a certain house. The case was urgent, the man to be taken into custody was known to be a desperate character, and was believed to have several accomplices. A posse comitatus was summoned, and Mr. Ewing, greatly concerned for his brother's condition, joined the party. The house was surrounded, the fugitive apprehended, and properly secured, and the party went forward.

After journeying a few miles their progress was interrupted by a party of men, headed by a notorious bully, who, in a thundering voice, cried out :

“ Stop ! what are you doing with this man ? ”

“ I have served a warrant upon him : ” said the sheriff, “ and we are taking him to prison.”

With tremendous oaths, the bully swore that they should release the man and let him go ; then seeing the party about to advance, he leaped from his horse, and rushed towards the sheriff, with clinched fist and uplifted arm. Mr. Ewing in the mean time had sprung from his horse, placed himself in front of his brother, and stood ready to shelter him from violence.

The bully, scanning his robust frame and unblenching countenance, said :

“ You are a sturdy fellow. But I whip every man that crosses my path. I am called the bully of the county. Dare you fight me ? ”

“ I dare not ; ” was the mild reply, “ nor did I come

here to violate the laws in any way. The man is in the custody of an officer of the law, who has summoned us to assist, and we must do our duty."

"The man is innocent," exclaimed the bully.

"So much the better for him; justice will be done. The Court, and not we, must decide."

"Tell me not of the Court and officers," said the bully, and stepping around towards the sheriff, "I have owed this one a whipping for a long time, and now I will give it to him."

Mr. Ewing again interrupting him, said :

"You would not whip a dead man nor a dying one, look at him, and you will see he is almost as unable to defend himself. If you are a brave man you will not harm him. True courage never could attack weakness like his."

"If you take up this quarrel, I am your man," said the bully.

"I take up no quarrel. The sheriff is my brother. He has but lately risen from a bed of sickness; I cannot see him abused."

The bully, after uttering curses and threats of violence against the sheriff, said :

"Why do you keep yourself between us, since you dare not fight me nor take up the quarrel?"

"I take up no quarrel; I dare not offend against God nor the laws: but I dare, and will defend my sick brother from violence."

At these words, the bully, with ungovernable rage, assaulted Mr. Ewing, and seemed about to handle

him very roughly. His friends interposed, exclaiming, "They must not fight. Part them! Part them!" The bully's party rushed forward, denouncing vengeance against any who should attempt to part them, and insisting that they should have "a fair fight." This, according to the technicality of the times, was understood to mean, that the parties should continue their contest until one or the other cried for quarter, or gave signs of acknowledgment that "he was whipped."

The contest went on, and Walter Scott might have thought it the realization of his fiction of Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu. Mr. Ewing found his backwoods training in youthful sports, athletic feats, and Indian warfare, of decided advantage in his present peril. At first his friends looked on with perturbation and fear, while the other party raised cheers of encouragement and shouts of victory for their champion. At length it was discovered, that the bully was depressed and bleeding profusely; while Mr. Ewing appeared uninjured and invigorated, dealing his blows with great precision and effect. His friends crying: "Give it to him, Finis!"

The bully's party were now the ones to interfere, and raise the cry of—"Part them! Part them!" But the Sheriff's party indignantly rushed forward with their loaded whips, exclaiming: "You said a fair fight! And a fair fight it shall be!" And a fair fight it was, according to the most approved practice of pugilism. Had there now been any further interference, a general battle and the loss of life might have been the consequence.

The bully, finding himself engaged with an antagonist of no mean strength and prowess, and feeling somewhat uncomfortable from the wounds on his head and face, from which the flowing blood served greatly to embarrass his visual organs, thought proper, for this once, to doff his title of "bully of the county," and cry aloud for quarter. Mr. Ewing immediately released him, and assisting him to mount his horse, ordered him to clear himself. He did so, followed by his companions; some of whom were heard to murmur applauses of the stranger's gallantry, perhaps secretly gratified at seeing a turbulent spirit at last quelled. Without further molestation the prisoner was taken to jail.

This affair, being reported to the majority of the Presbytery, perhaps without its justifying circumstances, is said to have produced the decision before stated. It certainly was not of a clerical character, nor indicative of the talent most to be desired by a minister. Reduced to the alternative of seeing his sick brother ill treated, or of defending him from the threatened violence, Mr. Ewing's choice was justifiable and praise-worthy under the circumstances. The incident however was always a subject of regret; and in speaking of it years afterwards, he seemed to ascribe its favorable issue, more to a superintending providence than to his own physical power.

The evangelical party dissatisfied with the action of the Presbytery in April, now determined to adopt measures which they hoped would lead to a more favorable result at the meeting of that body in October following. Accordingly several congregations got up petitions to

Presbytery, numerous signed, praying for the licensure of the young men. Dr. Davidson, in his History, page 226 and 7 states, "several petitions being offered from Rockbridge, Sharon, and other societies, importunately praying for the licensure of the four catechists — Anderson, Ewing, King and McLean — and their labors being represented as highly acceptable and marked with the divine blessing, the Presbytery proceeded to examine them with a view to that object." He tells us afterwards that Presbytery proceeded to license them, with the exception of McLean, by the large vote of seventeen to five. For this result, though not equal to their wishes, the evangelical party glorified God.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIGHT ARISETH IN DARKNESS.

Discouraging report — People afflicted — Unwilling to lose their preacher — A question — Decided for Presbyterianism — Their favorite minister returns — Power of his preaching — Recommends prayer meetings — Asks prayers for himself — Prospects — The gospel for all — Four classes of hearers — The ignorant — The careless — Infidels — Formalists — The latter occasion most grief — Responsibilities of Christians — Abstract of a sermon — Living piety and dead formality — Prejudice — A formalist converted — Visit to an intelligent infidel — The gospel triumphs.

AFTER Mr. Ewing had left this district to attend the Presbytery, it was reported that the revival was becoming disorderly; that outcries and fallings down were frequent; that McGready, McGee and others, encouraged these disorders; but that certain influential old ministers were determined to arrest the progress of these irregularities, and silence all the exhorters. Consequently it was inferred that the man who had been laboring with so much success, and was so greatly beloved in that district, would not be permitted to return. With the exception of a few infidels, who still adhered to their false philosophy, and a few worldlings, who were unwilling that people's consciences should be alarmed, this news was received with universal regret and dissatisfaction. The few disciples, especially those who had embraced religion since the commencement of the

revival, were filled with grief and consternation. They were not disposed thus summarily to dissolve their connection with one who had labored faithfully and assiduously for the salvation of their families and friends, and had been the instrument of signal blessings to the community. They had seen the infidel silenced, if not convinced, the formalist abandoning his false foundation, the worldling alarmed in his conscience, the profane swearer pleading for pardon, the mourner comforted, and the wavering confirmed. His example and precepts had not been lost on their children and servants. He had always a word of instruction, counsel, or encouragement for all who came in his way. His conciliatory address and affectionate manners rendered him a welcome, an honored guest in every family. All desired his return; and the thought that they should see his face no more, inflicted deep sorrow and dejection. But after what had been done for them, and their present cheering prospects, the idea that they were again to be left as sheep without a shepherd, was indeed insupportable. They asked one of another, can it be possible that any of our ministers are disposed to obstruct the revival because some, like the Samaritan, "with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down at Jesus' feet, giving thanks;"* and others, like the blind Bartimeus, "cried out, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me."† If the work be of God, they cannot prevail against it, nor succeed better than did those who "charged the blind man that he should hold his peace."

* Luke xvii, 15, 16.

† Mark x, 47.

In many of the places where meetings had been held, the people began to consider what they would do, if indeed the Presbytery should not send to them Mr. Ewing nor any one else. Should they call preachers of other denominations? It need not be a matter of surprise that there were some, on so large a circuit, who were in favor of a connection with the Methodist church, provided they should be abandoned in their present extremity by the church of their choice. But these were not numerous. A very large majority, however they might respect the piety and zeal of that denomination, could not adopt Arminian sentiments. They were still less disposed to seek supplies from the Baptists who, besides their different views on baptism, were not then remarkably intelligent, and were thought to lean too much to Antinomianism: these have since been known as Anti-missionary Baptists.

These anxieties and agitations were brought to a close, by Mr. Ewing's return to the circuit. All seemed to rejoice that the Presbyters had regarded them not as aliens or exiles unworthy of their regard, but as orphan children requiring their fostering care, and heirs of Christ's kingdom entitled to its privileges. Their first and favorite teacher had been licensed as a probationer, and was now in their midst, with enlarged powers for doing good: not now confined to exhortation and sermonizing only by stealth, but fully authorized to announce his text and, according to his own judgment, use or omit the formalities of a regular discourse.* They

* It was usual with the Transylvania Presbytery to limit her

trusted he had come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." He had indeed come with a heart burdened with the weight of his responsibility, a spirit oppressed with a sense of his insufficiency for the important work to be performed, but with humble reliance on divine aid. He used to say to the brethren, "the minister as well as the Christian, struggling alone, can do nothing; but the grace of God assisting, can do all things." He preached even with more power than he had done the year before. At every appointment crowds came to hear; great solemnity prevailed; there was often much weeping and some cases of pungent conviction.

At each of his preaching places, Mr. Ewing assembled the few living Christians and recommended to them, the establishment of weekly meetings for reading the scriptures, prayer and praise. He particularly requested their prayers for the divine blessing on his labors. Though he could visit each place only once in about four weeks; yet he would be laboring every day somewhere, for the salvation of souls. Paul might plant, Apollos water, but God alone could give the increase. He had

licensed exhorters in the use of scripture texts, as the foundation of their discourses, and in other ways still more absurd and ridiculous. Smith speaks, page 586, of the exhorters delivering discourses, "without the formality of announcing a text." And Dr. Davidson, page 122, speaks of two candidates being "licensed to exhort publicly, under the limitation of not exhorting oftener than once in two weeks &c." He mentions other limitations which may be proper enough; but this looks like casting men upon an ice-berg for two weeks, lest they should strike fire, and send forth more light and heat than would conduce to every body's comfort.

promised to hear the prayer of faith. and could answer by bestowing the richest blessings. He reminded them how frequently the greatest of the Apostles requested his brethren to pray especially for him, that he might "open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." And if a divinely inspired Apostle felt the necessity of the prayers of God's people, much more might one of the feeblest advocates of Christ's cause. If in that case it was the duty of the brethren to pray for their minister, in this it is not only their duty but their interest: for their minister can never hope to profit them without divine aid.

And in order to interest their sympathies and prayers, he made known the state and prospects of the different places of meeting on the circuit, detailing not only the encouraging, but the disheartening circumstances; those inspiring his hopes and those exciting his fears, those promising success and those betokening failure. He said the gospel message was to every creature: * none were to be despaired of. And while it was the minister's duty to "preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine;"† it was no less the duty, as well as the privilege of the people, "to strive together with him in their prayers to God."‡ He believed God was preparing a blessing for the people of the circuit. There was evidently a general anxiety to hear the gospel. The Spirit of God appeared to be at work with the hearts of the people. Opposition was to be expected from the

* Mark xvi, 15.

† 2 Timothy iv, 2.

‡ Romans xv, 13.

god of this world and his worshipers. But lamentable to tell, there was, in some places, opposition from the professed followers of Jesus Christ, who were ministers and members of the Presbyterian church.

He supposed his congregations, generally, to be composed of the following classes: 1. The ignorant, including a great portion of the young. These were to be instructed in the scriptures, to be taught their duties and responsibilities as rational and accountable creatures, and as candidates for eternity, to be made acquainted with the claims and conditions of the gospel, its promised blessings and threatened penalties. 2. Those more or less acquainted with the provisions of the gospel, but too much engrossed by the world, and wedded to their sins, to yield to its claims. These need not so much to be instructed, as reasoned with, awakened from their insensibility, alarmed in their consciences, and apprised of their danger and exposure to the wrath of God which awaits impenitent sinners. 3. Those deluded by infidelity. These require a course of argumentation different from all the others. It is not enough to prove to them a doctrine or a duty from the scriptures: they require proof of the scriptures themselves. They occupy ground directly opposed to Christianity, not one inch of which will they yield, while it can be maintained by reason or sophistry. Their arguments are to be promptly met, their objections patiently answered, and their bulwark of false philosophy fairly demolished. 4. Members of the church who have not experienced a change of heart. These insist on certain doctrines and usages, to the

neglect of some truths plainly inculcated, and some duties as clearly enjoined ; as members of the church, they wield an influence not very favorable to vital piety ; and sometimes the Saviour is wounded in the house of his friends. They cannot endure sound doctrine ; and truth, designed to show them the state of their own hearts, lead them to examine the foundation of their hopes, and test the genuineness of their faith, invariably offends them. They seem to trust in their own righteousness, and not the righteousness which is of God by faith. They occasion more grief and vexation to a minister than all other classes, criticising severely, and finding fault unmercifully. They are generally found among the opposers of the revival.

The living members of Christ had now much to do ; their responsibilities, at all times great, were now immeasurably increased ; it was no time for slothfulness, for burying of talents, for idleness in the market-place. "Ye are the salt of the earth," "the light of the world." Let your light shine before men, that they may glorify your Father in heaven. Ye are workers together with God, and must work while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work.*

In his preparation for the pulpit, Mr. Ewing's practice was to study his subjects thoroughly, and arrange his ideas and arguments in a manner calculated to make lasting impressions on the minds of his hearers. Preaching often and without notes, it is believed he wrote but

* John ix, 4.

few, if any sermons, except those designed for publication, and these not until after they had been delivered extemporaneously. He is said to have preached with great power and happy effect from the following text : “ If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? ” * He regarded this passage of scripture as comprising all intelligent beings under two classes of opposite character, to one or the other of which, every individual must inevitably belong ; those of the first class, by the merits of Christ who has brought in an everlasting righteousness and the influences of the Holy Ghost renewing their natures, being made *righteous* by faith ; those of the second class rejecting the only way of salvation, which is the Lord our righteousness, and continuing impenitent and unbelieving, being denominated the *ungodly* and the *sinner* ; these two differing only in form and profession. A counterfeit coin belongs to the class of base metals, and resembles that which is genuine only in form and external covering : he argued that the ungodly are classed with sinners, and differ from them in nothing, except in outward form and profession assumed in imitation of the righteous. But as there are certain tests, by which the false could be known from the true ; he proceeded to apply certain scripture tests, by which the ungodly and the sinner might be distinguished from the godly or righteous. If, through the assisting grace and guiding Spirit of God, the righteous get to heaven with difficulty,

* 1 Peter iv, 18.

through this dangerous and ensnaring world ; what shall be the doom of the ungodly and the sinner, who equally reject that grace and resist that Spirit ?

Discourses, of which the above is but an imperfect specimen, were designed to show the difference between living piety and dead formalism, to build up the spiritually minded in the most holy faith, and, driving the carnally minded professor from his false foundation, lead him to build on the rock, Christ Jesus. This kind of preaching, however unusual in that region, and however unpalatable to some, has scarcely been found more necessary, perhaps, in any Christian country or at any period of time. There were those in various places, who had belonged to the Presbyterian church in the older States, who neither knew nor sought to know any thing about experimental religion ; who appeared to think that, by their connection with the church, their observance of all its ordinances and their maintenance of an honest, upright deportment among men, they were doing all they could ; and the amount of righteousness thus wrought out by themselves with the merits of Christ superadded, would amply secure their salvation. It was common to hear them say, " I do all I can, and what I cannot do, Christ will do for me ; if after I have done the best I can, I lack any thing, Christ must supply the balance." These, and similar expressions, led Mr. Ewing privately to question the persons using them ; and the result was a conviction in his mind that they knew nothing of a change of heart. They seemed to think their calling and election sure, because, believing

and doing some things, disbelieving and shunning other things, they were not openly wicked as other men are. Hence, in private as well as in public, he dwelt much on the necessity and evidences of the new birth; and he strenuously insisted that, trusting in one's own righteousness was deceiving one's self and building on the sand: "for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." * The idea of doing the best we can and expecting Christ to supply the balance, is placing our own works in connection with the righteousness of Christ, as part of a joint stock, and making ourselves partners with him in our salvation. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." † Our best services stand in need of purification and forgiveness. Either Christ is all things to the believer, or he is nothing; if grace does not the entire work of salvation, it is left undone.

A gentleman noted for his intelligence, originally from Scotland, who had for many years held the office of ruling elder in the Presbyterian church in North Carolina — than whom the writer recollects no one better versed in ancient and modern history and but few better acquainted with the scriptures — had heard of the difficulties in Transylvania Presbytery, growing out of the licensure of some unlearned men, and declared his irreconcilable repugnance to so dangerous a measure. He had sometimes heard illiterate preachers of other denominations, who seemed to him, neither qualified to

* Isa. lxiv, 6.

† Tit. iii, 5.

instruct the people nor calculated to honor the cause of religion. His denominational pride — he used to say — was alarmed at the thought of illiterate preachers among his own people who had generally insisted on a learned ministry. Hearing that one of these very men, thus improperly licensed to preach, had appointed a meeting at a place not far distant from his residence, he thought he could not attend, without thereby giving countenance to proceedings which would result in nothing better than disgrace to the church and mortification to his own feelings. After a struggle with his prejudices, however, he did attend ; but he was most agreeably — or as he used to say, “ *gloriously* ” — disappointed. Instead of an ignoramus disgusting every body, by his uncouth language, unintelligible ideas and heterodox sentiments, as he had expected, he beheld a person of prepossessing and gentlemanly appearance, whose eye beamed with intelligence, whose countenance bespoke weighty thoughts struggling for utterance, and whose whole demeanor evinced him to be a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith ; and he listened to a discourse which, for originality of thought, cogency of argument, soundness of doctrine, and eloquence of enunciation, he thought unrivalled. He was afterwards heard to say, if this was a specimen of the preachers which the revival had produced, he never desired to hear any other class.

To the last day of his life, this old gentleman would eloquently describe that meeting, and many others succeeding ; and he did not hesitate to make known the fact that he had been long a member of the church,

without any experience of grace ; having a name to live while he was dead ; that while he was “ a spot on the feast of charity, a cloud without water,” * the faithful preaching of Mr. Ewing was blessed of God to the discovery of his mistaken condition and the establishment of his hopes on the only sure foundation. He testified his gratitude by saying, he had heard, in Scotland and the United States, many eloquent preachers and learned doctors ; but, for detecting the formalist and alarming the sinner, he had never known the equal of Finis Ewing. In the fullness of his heart would he glorify God, that he had in his merciful providence, brought him to hear the precious truth from those lips which some had tried to seal, but God opened for the salvation of many souls. He was among the first to cast his lot with the Cumberland Presbyterian church after its organization, and was esteemed one of its brightest ornaments and firmest pillars. He died in the triumphs of faith ; and the writer attending his funeral, could but witness how fondly his memory was cherished, how deeply his death was lamented.

In the spring of this year, when Mr. Ewing was about to attend Presbytery, a gentleman of high respectability, and noted as well for his intelligence as for his infidel sentiments, who had notwithstanding been one of his constant hearers from his first coming to the circuit, invited the preacher to his house, with an importunity which scarcely admitted of a refusal. Mr. Ewing complied with the invitation and visited the family. He

* Jude 12.

found the lady of the house under concern of mind and seeking religion. But her husband, having studied Paine's and other infidel writings, adhered to his vain delusion. The time was principally spent in hearing and answering objections to the Christian religion and proving the authenticity of the Christian scriptures. The gentleman was rather confounded than convinced. He was evidently disquieted by some rising doubts; for he insisted that the preacher should again spend some time with him on his return; and promised to comply with the one condition on which his request was granted; that he would attentively read his Bible during the interval. In the mean time the lady and several of her neighbors professed religion. Mr. Ewing fulfilled his promise, and continued to visit this family as often as his labors on the circuit led him to the neighborhood. This gentleman's case shows how difficult it is for truth to supplant error, when the latter has obtained a lodgment even in an ingenuous mind. But error, being inherently weak, can maintain its ground against the omnipotence of truth, only by the succors it receives from the depraved heart. The result was, this gentleman became an honest inquirer, re-examined the infidel system, found it unsupported by reason, abandoned it, sought the truth as it is in Jesus, and finally found joy and peace in believing. Often has he been heard to give glory to God, for the providence which directed Finis Ewing to that part of the country; and often would he talk about the sermon which awakened his first serious reflections, and repeat the text: "Beware

lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” *

* Col. ii, 8-9.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WILDERNESS BECOMING GLAD.

First objects of new settlers — Blessings attending the gospel — Preaching in the open air — Good effects — Churches and school houses — Improvement in morals — Praying bands — Meeting at McAdow — General awakening — Extends — Societies formed — Petitions for a pastor — Mr. Ewing unanimously called — Ordained — His influence — The mother of churches — Its members — Still flourishing.

IN new countries seldom is any thing done for the benefit of society, until the settlers have provided for themselves and families the requisite domestic comforts. The people are generally too much occupied in erecting houses, improving farms, and raising crops, to consider or provide for their intellectual and spiritual wants. Sometimes whole communities, while rapidly advancing in temporal prosperity, continue long neglectful of their eternal interests ; while enjoying the rich blessings of a bountiful Providence they are unmindful of their duties and responsibilities to that God from whose beneficent hand all their blessings flow. They inquire, “What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?” after the manner of the Gentiles of other times. But the direction of infinite benevolence is, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be

added unto you.”* Wherever the gospel finds its way, civilization and all its attendant blessings are sure to follow. In proportion as the gospel wins the hearts of men, the soil is prepared, the seed sown, which, being warmed by vivifying rays from the sun of righteousness will, under a genial culture, produce a harvest of those virtues which dignify and adorn human nature.

When Mr. Ewing first came to this circuit, there was scarcely a house of worship or a school house within its bounds. Meetings were held in private houses, or, when the weather would permit, in the open air. In the latter case, a rudely constructed pulpit or stand was erected in a grove; and rows of timber or plank placed on logs, furnished seats for the congregation, the whites in front, and the blacks in the rear. Here has been delivered many a sermon, which, if not so learned and eloquent as those of a Massillon or a Melville, may have proceeded from a spirit no less fervent, and reached hearts no less sincere. Here, doubtless, have assembled those who as truly hungered and thirsted after righteousness as did the Vaudois of the valleys, or the Covenanters of the highlands; and though these worshipers had no fears of molestation from the civil powers, they had to bear the unsparing censures of cold-hearted brethren and carnal professors, backed by the scoffs of infidel objectors, and the repugnance of an ungodly world. “But the word of God is not bound,” nor is his Spirit confined either to Jerusalem or Samaria; the Father who “seeketh the true worshipers who worship him in

* Matt. vi, 81 - 83.

spirit and in truth,"* can find them out as well under the forest shade, as "in the temples made with hands." Thousands can testify that in these structures of a day's preparation, proud hearts were humbled, rebellious natures subdued, broken spirits healed, a holy people comforted, a feeble church strengthened, and God glorified in the salvation of many souls.

During the present year, 1803, the people at some of the preaching places erected meeting-houses, of hewed logs, it is true, but tolerably commodious, and sufficiently large to accommodate the congregations which ordinarily attended. Several school-houses also were built, and schools established. The Lord's day was beginning to be generally observed. The youth no longer devoted that sacred day, as in former years, to hunting and fishing; and a large proportion of the people found other time than the Sabbath, for visiting and feasting. Even those worldly amusements, to which the more wealthy class had been long addicted before immigrating to the country—such as dancing, horse-racing, and card-playing—were becoming unfashionable, and were considered by those formerly engaged in them, not altogether harmless or reputable. Before the gospel was preached in these counties, it is said, a house-raising, a log-rolling, or other public gathering, generally resulted in more or less drunkenness and profanity, sometimes in quarreling and fighting. But from the time of which we are writing, these things were of very rare occurrence. So true it is, that the gospel, where

* John iv, 28.

it is faithfully preached, tends to restrain from vice, even those who neither yield to its claims nor observe its precepts.

Mr. Ewing's preaching, from the first, had struck directly at the prevailing vices. He had clearly shown, that the depraved heart is the fountain from which all sins flow. He had argued, unless the fountain were cleansed, the heart regenerated, the soul must be inevitably lost. When a man's conscience is alarmed in view of his exposure to death and hell, there arises in his mind a desire to escape. This desire prepares him to give attention to the only way of escape, which is the gospel plan; and to hear of the only name, whereby sinners can be saved, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. And he who died for sinners has satisfied the claims of justice, magnified the law, brought in an everlasting righteousness, having become our mediator, intercessor, and surety; and now offers full pardon and free salvation to all, through faith. Where a whole community can be induced to listen to the faithful preaching of the word of God, there it is next to impossible for ignorance and vice to maintain the ascendancy.

At those preaching places where the number of professors of religion was sufficient to conduct the exercises, weekly meetings for prayer, &c., had been held, according to Mr. Ewing's suggestion. It is probable that the people engaged in this duty, and availed themselves of this privilege, not so much because their preacher had recommended, as because the word of God had enjoined, "the assembling of themselves

together," * for mutual edification. There is good reason to believe, they met at the times appointed, not to *say* their prayers, as a formal duty, but to offer up their desires to God for things agreeable to his will, under a deep sense of their own wants, and their need of divine aid and blessings. They doubtless took encouragement from the constitution which God has ordained: "Ask and it shall be given you—every one that asketh, receiveth." † With filial affection they desired a nearness to their heavenly Father, and remembered his gracious words: "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you." ‡ There had been occasional conversions, and some valuable accessions to their little praying bands; but as yet they had not witnessed those truly wonderful displays of victorious grace, with those numerous trophies which had been so signally manifested in other parts of the country. Some mercy-drops had fallen on all parts of the circuit, even more than they had once dared to expect, and for which they desired to be thankful; but still they prayed, that these might prove only the harbingers of a gospel-teeming shower. "The desire of the righteous shall be granted." §

It was early in the summer of 1803 that the displays of divine power and grace were manifested on this circuit, which were to change the moral aspect of the entire region. In the neighborhood of Mr. Hutchinson, where a church was afterwards organized and still flourishes, by the name of McAdow, and where Mr. Ewing had

* Heb. x, 25.

† Mat. vii, 7, 8.

‡ Jer. xxix, 12.

§ Prov. x, 24.

commenced his missionary labors, this work commenced. On Saturday of a two days' meeting, under a sermon of the usual interest, the large congregation seemed much affected; many were bathed in tears, and some cried aloud for mercy. At night Mr. Ewing preached again; and the interest still continuing to increase, mourners were invited to the anxious seats. Crowds came forward, inquiring: "What must I do to be saved?" They were directed to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," and informed of the promise: "and thou shalt be saved." They were also reminded that our Saviour himself has said: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." That was a night of wonderful power: some who had long been groaning under the burden of their sins, experienced a merciful deliverance; and many hardened sinners were brought to bow before the mercy seat of Christ.

On Sabbath, the news of what had taken place the day before, having circulated in all directions, a large congregation assembled. During the sermon, it is said, an awful solemnity seemed depicted on every countenance, and fearful trembling appeared to have seized every heart. There were several hopeful conversions, and the number of penitents continued to increase. The followers of the Lord, lately so feeble and few, rejoiced exceedingly.

Mr. Hutchinson, from whom the information is derived, being a good and graphic describer, we will allow him to tell the story. He says:

There were no careless ones then, or but very few.

Most of the sinners were seeking the salvation of their souls, crying for mercy or saying, 'pray for me.' And as for the Christians, they were fully employed, either in rejoicing with them that rejoiced, or in weeping with them that wept. That was a memorable day, and was followed by memorable consequences. We were soon enabled to rejoice over the conversion of some of our children, friends, neighbors, and fellow-citizens. And as the work progressed, our unconverted friends found the Lord precious, ready to forgive, and able to save; they could embrace him in their arms of faith, not only at church, but at home, in their closets, in the woods, by the way-side, almost any where. Our wilderness became glad for them, and our desert continued to blossom as the rose.

What a highly favored people were we! And what cause had we for praise and thanksgiving! We said, truly "what shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?" We wished to "offer in his tabernacle our sacrifices of joy." We wanted to dwell in his house all the days of our lives. We loved the Lord, and desired to serve him. We loved one another and must worship our God together, and walk to his house in company. We loved our unconverted friends, and must follow them with our united prayers, our faithful warnings, our affectionate entreaties, if peradventure they might turn and live. We must provide for them, for ourselves, for all, instruction in righteousness, even the services of the sanctuary. We must unite in society. We must build up a church. Our

beloved pastor must advise and instruct us in this matter, before his departure to the fall meeting of Presbytery.

But who were to compose our church? The weak had now become strong. Instead of a few, we were now many on the side of the Lord. Instead of three or four, a great company had come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. The gracious work had extended throughout the circuit. It had run from one preaching place to another, like fire in the stubble, and seemed to sweep all before it. From all accounts the telegraph is a wonderful invention. But the Spirit of God is infinitely more powerful to carry truth to the heart and imprint it on the conscience. By the fall of this year, new societies were formed in various places. Our country was too new for any one congregation to support a pastor; but all united could sustain a missionary on the circuit. The societies took counsel on the subject; and it was unanimously agreed that we would send petitions to Presbytery, praying that the man whose labors had been so abundantly blessed among us, might be set apart to the whole work of the ministry, and appointed to organize our churches and administer the word and ordinances. We never thought to inquire whether there were any better preachers; the one we called for was good enough for us. We knew not, and cared not, how learned, talented, and popular others might be; our choice had fallen on one who had proved himself to be all that we desired. We would not have exchanged him for a Davis or a Witherspoon. I do believe, if the Presbytery had sent us another Wesley

or Whitefield, we would have been disappointed and dissatisfied. There was one man who, two years before, had come among us "weeping, bearing precious seed, who could come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." We preferred that man to all others, whose spiritual children on the circuit could be counted by scores and hundreds; and that man was Finis Ewing.

From Mr. Hutchinson's account it would appear that several societies petitioned for Mr. Ewing's ordination. Dr. Davidson mentions only those of Spring Creek, McAdow, and Clarkesville. Smith mentions the same, and quotes from the Cumberland Presbytery* book, as follows: "In view of these petitions and the wants of the young societies, many of whom needed and much desired the administration of the sealing ordinances, Presbytery agrees that Mr. Ewing be ordained on the Friday before the third Sabbath in November next." Whether the petitions of some of the societies failed to reach the Presbytery in time to be noticed on her minutes, or that body thought the record of three sufficient, has not been ascertained; nor is it in either case a matter of much importance.

Mr. Ewing continued to labor on this, his first circuit,

* Had the writer been engaged in producing a history of the church, instead of an individual, it would have been proper before to have noticed the fact that, at the first meeting of the Kentucky Synod, in October, 1802, Transylvania Presbytery was divided, and a new Presbytery formed, including the Green River and Cumberland countries, that is, southern Kentucky, and the part of Tennessee lying west of the mountains. This was the Cumberland Presbytery, by which Mr. Ewing was ordained

for a year and a half or two years after his ordination. Such were the attachments of the people to their minister, and such their confidence in the man whom most of them regarded as their spiritual father, that they would not exchange him for any other, whatever his character might be for learning, talents and piety. And it is doubtful whether any other at the time could have wielded so great influence, so fully have won their hearts, or wrought so successfully among them. At McAdow he had made his first acquaintance, and preached his first sermon. Here the first mercy drops had fallen, and here was afterwards sent the first copious and refreshing shower. Here the first church was organized, and here was held the first camp meeting on this circuit. The writer has visited this congregation several times, and has had opportunity of becoming better acquainted with its history than with others.

This church has been generally prosperous, and at times abundantly blessed: it has been remarkable for the number and extent of its revivals. These seasons of refreshing have kept the ranks filled and the church flourishing; while many emigrants have gone forth to the new states and territories, forming in various places, the nucleus of other churches which, by the blessing of God, have been gathered through their instrumentality. This has been the mother of churches in other states. Hence have originated some very able and useful ministers; among whom are the two Morricks and Wm. I. Hutchinson, a son of the venerable Elder whose statements we have had occasion to repeat. Rev. Robert

Morrows, D. D. is known as the President of Chapel Hill College, in the state of Missouri. The members of the church at McAdow are generally engaged in agricultural pursuits. The prevalent vices and follies of the towns are here unknown, or only known to be pitied and shunned. They are a humble, unostentatious people ; but they have more religious intelligence than many who make much higher pretensions. The Bible in their families appears to be their rule of life, and, with other good books, their most valued fountain of knowledge. While the old have maintained a godly walk and pious conversation ; the young have enjoyed their instructions, followed their examples, and now seem to make religion the great business of life. The fathers and mothers in Israel have nearly all gone to their everlasting reward ; but the sons and daughters in Zion fill their places : the departing Elijahs seem to have let fall their mantles upon the young Elishas. On this circuit, Mr. Ewing organized many churches, from the fruits of the revival, of which he had been the visible instrument. McAdow at present is probably among the largest and most efficient country churches in Middle Tennessee. Most of the others, organized by Mr. Ewing about the same period, have continued to prosper, and with few exceptions will compare favorably with churches in the country generally.

CHAPTER X.

CLOUDS IN THE ECCLESIASTICAL HORIZON.

Two parties — Mr Dickey — Party spirit — Shiloh calls Craighead — Waning influence — Ministers of Upper Kentucky — Death of Anderson — His character — Ewing's lamentation — His counsel to the brethren — His seat in Presbytery objected to — The design — Overruled — His meekness — His motives — Attends Synod — His two brothers — The letter of Craighead — Citations and appointment of a Committee — Unconstitutional — Corrupt party in Scotland — Impressions of the parties — Views of the Messrs. Ewing — Rising storm — Cameron — Nelson and Hodge ordained — Grand cause of the separation — The Commission appointed.

IT has been already said, and the reader will often have occasion to notice, that from the first appearance of the revival, five ministers belonging to the Cumberland Presbytery which had been stricken off from the Transylvania, were opposed to the work, as spurious. These were Messrs. Craighead, Balch, Bowman, Donnell, and Templin, who were called the anti-revival party. An equal number regarded the work as a genuine outpouring of the Spirit of God, and labored day and night for its promotion. These were Messrs. McGready, Hodge, McGee, McAdow, and Rankin, who were known as the revival party. These parties were equally balanced, distinctly marked, and opposed in the general to each others' measures. They had with each other but very little intercourse, except when thrown together at their

meetings of Presbytery, or when the anti-revivalists mingled among the crowd at the meetings of the other party, for the purpose of criticising and fault-finding: the latter certainly was not a friendly intercourse. The reception of Mr. Hawe, the Methodist, by Transylvania Presbytery, and ordination of Messrs. Anderson, Ewing, and King, had increased the revival party from five to nine. The death of Mr. Anderson in 1804 reduced their number to eight; but the ordination of Samuel Hodge and Thomas Nelson augmented their number to ten.

The anti-revival party too were very anxious to add to their number and increase their strength. But how was this to be done? There were in that part of the country but very few educated young men, and they had made too much noise about literary qualifications to adventure upon any who did not make at least some pretensions to learning. Besides, the pious and intelligent generally had, by this time, become favorable to the revival. There was in the Presbytery a man, concerning whom Dr. Davidson, in a note* quotes from the minutes of Transylvania Presbytery, in 1801, the following: "Whereas, Mr. Dickey, [then a candidate,] is reported to have absented himself from the communion of the church, and opposed the revival of religion in many instances, the Presbytery recommend it to the said Dickey henceforth to return to Christian communion, and endeavor to promote vital religion; and in order to this, always endeavor to direct either real, blind, or false zeal from every other object to the faith of Christ."

* Dav. His. pp. 231 and 282.

The above extract would represent this Mr. William Dickey, as possessing the character and qualifications, not likely to be overlooked nor undervalued by the anti-revival party; and they ordained him in 1805, which accession increased their number to six. All these ordinations were of course by the order of Presbytery; but the ordination services were performed by their respective parties. At the time of the meeting of the commission of Kentucky Synod the revival party had a majority of four ministers and almost all the elders; hence the censures intended to be passed upon the Cumberland Presbytery were aimed only at the revival party.

The state of affairs in Presbytery produced a party spirit, which for a time threatened the most serious consequences, and bade fair to involve the members of the different churches in implacable contentions. But the revival ministers were too well employed to concern themselves much about the censures cast upon them, and took special pains to give no cause of offence, further than their measures and the incidents of the work might offend. The consequence was, as the revival progressed, as one after another formalist became converted, and many stubborn spirits yielded to the force of truth, their opponents were left almost without adherents among the people. There were only a few here and there who remained obstinate, and a portion of the Shiloh congregation, who, after violently closing the church doors against their pastor, Mr Hodge, and being censured by Presbytery, seceded and called Dr. Craig-

head as their pastor.* Opposition to the revival at length seemed in a good degree to be broken down. Worldly mindedness generally was alarmed; and infidelity was almost silenced. The opposition plainly saw that their influence was nearly gone, and their popularity lost; they now redoubled their efforts to make what interest they could among the ministers of Central and Upper Kentucky. These were generally good men; and under other circumstances, it is believed, they would not have enlisted in the ranks of opposition to a genuine revival. But even good men are liable to be deceived by the artful misrepresentations of those in whom they confide; and the more injurious these misrepresentations may be, the more violent may become their prejudices. It was, however, only by confounding the revival with the New Light excitement — against the errors of which these good men were battling with all their might — that the anti-revivalists gained their full confidence; and when this was done, an extension of their abhorrence of the latter to the former also was the natural consequence. In this way, it is confidently believed, the ministers of Central and Upper Kentucky

* Rev. T. C. Anderson, President of Cumberland University, whose local situation enabled him to obtain accurate knowledge of the fact, says, "the majority of the party of the Shiloh congregation who closed the doors against Mr. Hodge, and called Dr. Craighead, as their pastor, subsequently united with the Stoneites or New Lights." This unequivocally proves that they opposed the revival and the party favoring it, not from their love of orthodoxy and order, as they pretended, but from their love of error, too gross to be openly avowed at the time.

were induced to take common ground with the original opposers of the revival.

The revival party were called about this time to mourn the death of Rev. Alexander Anderson. It seemed an inscrutable Providence. He was the first of the young men licensed by the Transylvania, and the first ordained by the Cumberland Presbytery. His great zeal and eminent usefulness had been witnessed. Of his services to the church, high hopes had been entertained. On his being licensed, he had employed a person to superintend his farm, and from that time, till his death, devoted himself to the work of the ministry. Nor were his sacrifices and labors in vain. A holy unction attended his ministrations; and during the few years of his ministerial life, he was the acknowledged instrument of saving many, very many precious souls. He had been very much respected and beloved by all who knew him. It is even said that he was almost idolized by those who knew him best; and some have supposed, it was for this reason that the Lord saw proper to remove him to his inheritance on high. He had seen the cloud of opposition rising, which portended the approaching storm, and was heard to express a wish that, if consistent with the divine will, he might not live to witness it. His prayer was answered, and the church was doomed to mourn. His uprightness and amiability of character had won the confidence and love of all parties.

He died at his post, while itinerating as a preacher in Kentucky, February, 1804. He was the father

of Rev. T. C. Anderson, the talented President of Cumberland University, at Lebanon, Tennessee.

Few could feel the death of this good man more sensibly than Mr. Ewing. Few had known him more intimately. Together had these two men often mingled their thoughts, their sympathies, and their prayers. They had engaged in the same holy calling, under similar difficulties, and had left houses and lands, and wives and children, for the sake of Christ and his gospel. They had often talked over their mutual trials, comforted and encouraged each other, and discussed the glories of that bright world, where a crown of righteousness awaited them. Mr. Ewing now saw peculiar beauty in David's lamentation over Jonathan, and could say, "I am distressed for thee, my brother." He remarked to Mr. Hutchinson, "If I know what are the exercises of a man called of God, as was Aaron, Brother Anderson was so called. If I have a proper conception of a man full of the Holy Ghost and faith, he was that man. His meekness, gentleness, and forbearance, were as truly lovely to behold, as they were powerful to disarm opposition. He has been wise to win souls; his will be a starry crown."

Mr. Ewing, during the year 1804, was still laboring on his circuit, and the revival was progressing with great power under his ministrations. News of the efforts of the opposition, attended with circumstances very much calculated to afflict and offend, frequently reached the brethren in this quarter. But he advised to let none of these things move them. He said, "we can

be better employed. God is able to overrule all to his own glory, and the good of them that love him. Let us be workers together with him, showing that we have not received the grace of God in vain. If God be for us, who can be against us?"

At the meeting of Presbytery in the spring, the opposing members resorted to a novel method of annoying the majority as well as of wounding Mr. Ewing. They objected to his taking his seat as a presbyter, under the pretence that he had been illegally ordained. Had they disapproved of his ordination before? There is no evidence that they had done so. What then could have been their real motive? It is scarcely possible that all of them could have been so grossly ignorant of ecclesiastical government as to suppose that Presbytery, after ordaining a man and admitting him a constituent member of their body, could reverse their own decision, ignore their own act, and refuse him a seat. They knew too that a majority of the ministers and nearly all the elders loved the man for his works' sake. It is impossible to conceive that they had the slightest hope of actually depriving him of his seat. They must have had another object. They were aware of the petitions for his licensure and ordination, which had, for two years previous, come from several congregations on his circuit; nor were they ignorant of the gracious work then in progress there, through his instrumentality. But to them, these facts were no recommendations. It is impossible under the circumstances to see what was intended by this procedure, beyond annoyance or insult. So doubtless

thought the Presbytery: for the objection was soon overruled by a large majority.

Mr. Ewing was not of a character or temperament to brook insult. While he scrupulously respected the rights of others, he was generally prompt to assert and resolute to maintain his own. Even then his indomitable energy of character, his independence, self-reliance and power of resisting obtrusion whether by his arguments or his raillery were known; and few would be willing to provoke a personal encounter with him, with justice on his side. A whole party of old ministers could venture upon it, flattering themselves perhaps with the hope of their own impunity, and the prospect of betraying him into indiscretion. Some, indeed, believing an insult actually intended, were surprised at his leaving the matter entirely to the management of the Presbytery. Believing it was the intention of the opposition to mortify his feelings, it is thought, he deemed silent neglect the best method of defeating it. This, a man of his position in society and of his character as a successful minister, could well afford to do. But it is probable there was another reason for his forbearance under so trying circumstances: the death of the lamented Anderson had occurred only a month or two before. And the affliction occasioned by the loss of so dear a fellow-laborer, as well as the remembrance of the exemplary meekness of the deceased, may have tended at the time to soften any rising asperity of feeling. The action of Presbytery in the premises, was all that he could desire. And whatever may have been the design of the opposition

its defeat seems sufficiently to have entangled them in their own snare.

In the fall of 1804, Mr. Ewing attended the meeting of the Synod of Kentucky. Besides himself, there were present from the Cumberland Presbytery, Messrs. McGready and Donnell, with their elders, Reuben Ewing, Young Ewing, and John Dickey. The two Messrs. Ewing were brothers of the subject of this biography. Reuben was a Judge of one of the Courts of Kentucky, and Young has been long known in the political annals of that State, and was a Colonel in the expedition under Gen. Hopkins, in the war of 1812. At this meeting, was presented a letter, signed by Craighead, Donnell, and Bowman, remonstrating against the proceedings of the Cumberland Presbytery. The Synod cited both the parties, complained of and complaining, to appear before them the next fall. Besides, a committee of five ministers was appointed by that body to attend the earliest meeting of the Cumberland Presbytery, and report the result of their observations.

These citations, as every well informed Presbyterian must acknowledge, were not only without warrant in ecclesiastical law, but a palpable violation of the constitution. The Synod is not competent to originate any process against individual ministers; but the discipline expressly declares, that "Process against a gospel minister shall always be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member." * The Synod can deal with a Presbytery as such if any thing has been done amiss;

* Discipline, Ch. v. Art. 11.

but cannot act judicially in the case of a minister, until it has come regularly before them by appeal from the decision of Presbytery. So even the General Assembly has several times decided, particularly in 1808. The appointment of the Committee also was an unwarrantable stretch of power. Propriety and common decency should forbid the sending of men to act as spies on the proceedings of a Presbytery. This is believed to be without precedent in Presbyterian government except in the appointment of the ambulatory committees by the corrupt "Moderate party," so called by which the evangelical Church of Scotland was long oppressed; and by means of which that unscrupulous party were able "to overrule the conscientious reluctance of a Presbytery to inflict a grievous wrong upon the people.*"

In consequence of the Synod's proceedings, the members from Cumberland Presbytery returned to their homes, with very different feelings and impressions. Donnell and perhaps Dickey were buoyant with hope, believing their party was in the ascendant, and doubtless anticipating signal triumphs over those against whom they had so long arrayed themselves. Mr. McGready and the Messrs Ewing were dispirited and disconsolate; and they sought a place where to weep, and pour out their sorrows before the Comforter. Mr. McGready had been under God, the acknowledged instrument of ushering in the revival; he had viewed it as a great light, shining in a dark place; and how could he submit to its extinguishment? Unable to fathom the motives

* Hetherington's His. Scot. p. 341.

of the Synod, of one thing he was satisfied ; the bearing of these measures foreboded nothing good.

The Messrs. Ewing suspected the acts of Synod, however intended, were at least calculated in their very nature to operate against the gracious work, its measures, such as camp meetings, &c., and against its promoters, among whom the three brothers had been more or less conspicuous. They had been among the first fruits of this revival ; they highly appreciated it for what they trusted it had instrumentally done for themselves and others already ; and they desired to see it progress, and extend its benign influences till the the victories of the cross should be many, and all flesh should see the salvation of God. In this work they believed they had first breathed spiritual life, first tasted the hidden manna, and had grown in grace, knowledge, usefulness, and assurance of salvation. Here they had seen the Sabbath breaker, the profane swearer, the drunkard, the gambler, the scoffer, the worldly-wise, and downright infidel, as well as the self-deceived, the backslider, the formalist, by the word and Spirit of God arrested, alarmed, convicted, subdued, finally converted, and made to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

They were aware that the revival had been opposed from its first commencement by certain ministers of their own Presbytery, but little did they expect to find a like spirit elsewhere. They had no idea at the time that the anti-revival party had succeeded in seducing the influential members of the Kentucky Synod to confound this genuine revival with the dreaded New

Light excitement. Had they been assured that these good men were about to adopt the cause of Craighead, Balch, Bowman, and others, they might have been no less astonished than were the disciples of our Lord when Pilate and Herod were made friends. Whatever might be the ultimate object of the Synod's proceedings they were convinced the means adopted to attain it were unconstitutional. And to "do evil that good may come," was not in accordance with their views.

On further consultation with their older brethren, and especially on considering the absurd statements and slanders contained in their opponents' letter, already referred to, they could not be blind to the fact that the want of literary qualifications on the part of some of the young men, and the objection to *fatality* by all, had been made the pretexts for their long and persevering opposition to the revival. How far this ingenious device could be successful, was indeed doubtful. How long men, venerable for their age and piety, could be thus deceived, was not ascertainable.

To what extent the anti-revivalists could foment party spirit, by availing themselves of the controversy in which these good men were engaged with the New Lights, was of course unforeseen. It was evident, however, that the friends of the revival had not now to contend with the anti revival party alone, who, by their unreasonable hostility, had now fallen so low in public estimation, they had become rather the objects of pity than of dread: they had to resist the unjustifiable acts of the Kentucky Synod. Difficulties were generally

anticipated. The friends of the revival were filled with gloomy apprehensions. Finis Ewing said, "I see a cloud rising which is the forerunner of a storm; and with the help of God, I for one will prepare to breast it." This was the approaching storm which so distressed the lamented Anderson, against which he prayed, and from which he was delivered by death.

Of the committee appointed by Synod "to attend the earliest meeting of the Cumberland Presbytery, and report the result of their observations," it appears that none attended except Rev. Archibald Cameron, "who on being invited to take a seat as a corresponding member," says Smith, "for obvious reasons refused." * This was in April, 1805. Mr. Ewing was present, and approved of the order which was passed for the ordination of Messrs. Thomas Nelson, and Samuel Hodge; and there is no evidence that he objected to the same order in behalf of Mr. William Dickey. It seems to be generally admitted that the literary qualifications of this Samuel Hodge were rather low, too low in fact to justify his ordination. He was the nephew of the venerable father Hodge, one of the earliest promoters of the revivals; and the Presbytery may have erred, supposing the excellencies of the latter might be possessed also by the former. His and Nelson's licensure and his ordination were afterwards unanimously recognized and confirmed by the Transylvania Presbytery, on their submitting to a re-examination: a convincing evidence that resistance to the unconstitutional encroachments of

Synod and refused to yield up the rights guaranteed to a Presbytery at the bidding of arbitrary authority, constituted the great difficulty which finally led to the separation. There is evidence to believe that both these men, especially Nelson, were useful in their vocation.

The Synod of Kentucky met at Danville, October 15, 1805. With regard to the real merits of this body's proceedings, Smith and Davidson have differed widely. The biographer will here attempt no adjustment. It may be safely predicted that the impartial historian, especially if he shall have any adequate knowledge of the form of Presbyterian government, will not pass them with the superficialness of the latter, nor without at least equal reprehension with the former.

By both of these historians it is expressly stated that this Synod appointed "a Commission, consisting of ten ministers and six elders; any seven ministers, with as many elders as should be present, to form a quorum;" "vested with full synodical power to adjudicate upon the proceedings of Cumberland Presbytery;" and "to meet at Gasper meeting-house, Logan county, in the bounds of said Presbytery." The Commission were directed to "take into consideration and decide upon a letter from Rev. Thomas B. Craighead and others."*

Here let it be particularly noticed that they were to adjudicate upon the proceedings of *the Presbytery*, not upon the conduct, character, or qualifications of *individuals*, whether licensed or ordained. They had no authority to obtrude their judgments upon Presbytery,

* *Der. His.* pp. 222 and 223.

interfering with her right to judge of the character and qualifications of her own candidates. Party spirit had not yet risen high enough for that. If they should transcend their authority so far as to undertake to deal with, and judge of, individuals — which even the power appointing them could not do — how could they escape censure? They were safe enough: they constituted the very strength and influence of the Synod.

CHAPTER XI.

INTEGRITY OF PRINCIPLE SURVIVES THE STORM.

Remarks — Rowland Hill — The Moderates of Scotland — Resemblances — Members of the Commission — Revival Ministers — Young men — When called for — Commission's demand — Refused — Ewing's course — Re-examination insisted on — De Vio and Luther — Motives not appreciated — Ewing's request — Opposed but finally granted — Hutchinson's account — The question put — All refuse — Reasons — Prohibitions — All punished, because some were accused — Inquisition and the Moderates — Authority overreached — Prejudice and party spirit — Truth ever lives, while error dies — Craighead's acquittal.

THERE is in general nothing hazardous in stating facts which are indisputable, and by all acknowledged to be true. The only danger lies in unfolding the principles involved in the facts, and in tracing them to their legitimate results. In this case a writer must see the necessity of caution, lest his own mind should be biased by personal predilections. And he will feel great delicacy in drawing those natural inferences which inevitably expose the violation of principles, confessedly sound, tending to wound the feelings of those whom he loves, and whose ecclesiastical relations have laid them under a kind of necessity for making the best defence they can. In setting forth the proceedings of the Commission of Kentucky Synod against the Cumberland Presbytery, facts within the memory of many now living, and recorded in history, will be

fairly and faithfully given. And reliance may be placed in the wisdom of posterity to vindicate the justice of such comments as may be made, against any charge of partiality. Indeed, some of the most enlightened of those whose ecclesiastical relations might have led them to justify the Synod's acts, have unhesitatingly admitted them to have been wrong: while not one of those who suffered by them, however they may have submitted, has ever been known to acknowledge their wisdom and justice, or even their constitutionality under the circumstances.

Precisely at the period when the corrupt "Moderate party" * were adopting tyrannical measures to exclude such good men as Rowland Hill and Simeon of Cambridge, from every pulpit in the Established Church of Scotland, because their doctrine was evangelical — while

* Hetherington's His. Scotland, pp. 382 and 383.

"The dispensation of mercy to fallen man, entirely by Jesus Christ is not the subject preached by the majority; but with some, a mangled gospel, law and gospel wretchedly spliced together; with others, a mere hungry system of bare-weight morality; and with a third, what is worse still, a deliberate attack on all the truths they have engaged to uphold. The few, in comparison, orthodox among them are stigmatized by the nickname of *the wild*, while the fashionable divines on the other side of the question, compliment themselves with the appellation of *the Moderate*. The epithet naturally reminds us of another, '*lukewarm*, neither cold nor hot.' In short, it is as with all who adopt the present half-way infidel system of the day, so report says, it is with them; the cause of morality declines with the cause of the gospel; and I fear the Scotts, by far the best educated and best behaved people in the British dominion, will soon be no better than their neighbors. Like their ministers, they will all become *Moderates*; first, they will be *Moderates* in religion; they will have

the same party were enacting that “licences granted to probationers, *without the bounds of this Church*, are invalid,” under the pretence that persons might obtain licence in England or Ireland, and be introduced into the church “without due qualifications”—there arose in the Green river and Cumberland countries, a set of Presbyterian ministers, who could oppose a genuine revival of religion, ridicule evangelical doctrine, and remonstrate against the licensure of pious and intelligent young men, whose labors were specially needed and prayed for, by the destitute congregations. Only a few short years after the sending forth of the ridiculous pastoral letter of that same Moderate party who lorded it over the Scottish church —“warning against giving countenance to religious societies, missionary associations, itinerant preachers, and Sabbath schools on the assumption that these were conducted by “ignorant persons,

Moderate notions of Jesus Christ and the gospel of salvation, for we cannot expect they will be better than their teachers; they will next be contented with a Moderate share of love to God, of prayer, and of repentance; they will be more *Moderate* in regard to the use of their Bibles, and be more *Moderate* in their zeal in teaching their children the Assembly’s catechism; and this will lead them to be *Moderates* in morality. In point of chastity, sobriety, honesty, &c., they will soon become *Moderate*, and be very anxious to grow in this famous fashionable *moderation*, till they become *immoderately* wicked; unless through divine mercy, they hear a little more of the ‘grace of God that bringeth salvation,’ the only doctrine that ‘teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.’”—(Journal through the North of England, and parts of Scotland, with Remarks on the Present State of the Established Church of Scotland, &c. By Rowland Hill pp 111, 112.)

altogether unfit for such an important charge"—the Kentucky Synod found the Cumberland Presbytery guilty of supplying destitute congregations, by means of itinerant preachers, and of recommending contributions for their support. The itinerancy was sufficiently objectionable ; but the contributions were unequivocally deemed "illegal." While Moderatism in Scotland for many years, "increasing in power, gave more open and vigorous exercise to its malignant nature, by violating the constitutional principles of the Presbyterian church, and reached its full development about the year 1805 ; in that same year a commission was appointed, by the Synod of Kentucky, to adjudicate on the proceedings of Cumberland Presbytery, and to take into consideration and decide upon a letter from Rev. Thomas B. Craighead and others : a mere letter of *common fame*, and full of misrepresentations and slanders. Surely the appointing power must have derived their precedents and principles of ecclesiastical government, from the corrupt party, which had long before tyrannized over their evangelical brethren, and still bore sway at that very time in the church of Scotland. The Synod's Commission bear a striking resemblance to the so called

* Heth. He also says, "It need scarcely be said now that these (and others not here specified,) accusations were altogether groundless ; and it hardly can be supposed that those who uttered such charges did themselves believe them. But it was a convenient mode of fixing the brand of "sedition" upon preachers and teachers of Christianity, as was done in the days of the Apostles, and has often since been repeated, when the enemies of the gospel wished to obtain a plausible pretext for persecuting its defenders.

ambulatory Commissions of the Moderate party. But whether even the well informed of that party would justify a Commission's assumption of power to re-examine licentiates and candidates under the care of a Presbytery, or, without process or form of trial, to silence ordained ministers against whom no charge of heresy or immorality had ever been preferred, is indeed rather questionable.

The Commission of Kentucky Synod assembled at Gasper meeting-house, on Tuesday, December 3d, 1805, and was duly organized. It is not necessary to notice their proceedings, further than they affected the ministerial standing of the subject of this biography, and of the other young men who had been opposed, first by the anti-revival party, but were to be assailed, now, by them with the strength and influence of the Synod of Kentucky superadded. The reader is referred, for further information, to some REMARKS ON DAVIDSON'S HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN KENTUCKY, to be found at the close of this volume.

It must be admitted, however, as opposition to the revival and its measures constituted the grand difficulty, and the young men had been very active instruments in promoting that good work, but very little was intended or attempted to be done, which had not a nearer or more remote bearing upon them.

The members of the Commission present were Rev. Messrs. Lyle, Cameron, Howe, Rennals, Stuart, Joshua L. Wilson, Cleland, and Tull, with the elders McDowell, Brank, Allen, Gaines, and Wallace.

The revival ministers of Cumberland Presbytery present were Rev. Messrs. James McGready, William Hodge, William McGee, Samuel McAdow, John Rankin, James Hawe, (formerly a Methodist, admitted by the Transylvania Presbytery,) Finis Ewing, Samuel King, Thomas Nelson, and Samuel Hodge, the last four having been ordained during the progress of the revival.

Neither Smith nor Davidson has stated, whether the anti-revival ministers belonging to Cumberland Presbytery were present or not. When it is remembered that all the members were cited to attend, that the Commission were appointed "to adjudicate on their Presbyterial proceedings," and that there is nothing in the warrant under which they acted, which can by any possible construction, whether fair or forced, authorize any kind of trial or dealing whatever, with individuals, it may be fairly inferred that both the parties felt bound to attend. It is certain that Craighead was present; for he was there tried for holding certain errors in doctrine, and acquitted. It is presumable that the others also were present.

Of the young men under the care of Cumberland Presbytery, there attended Messrs. Hugh Kirkpatrick, James B. Porter, Robert Bell, David Foster, and Thos. Calhoun who were licentiates, also Robert Guthrie, Samuel K. Blythe, and Samuel Donnell, who were candidates. It may be asked, why so many of the young men came to this meeting; since it is evident from the action of the Synod as well as the warrant given to the Commission, they were not cited to attend?

As the followers of Christ and friends of humanity, they would naturally feel a deep interest in an assemblage of great and good men, whose proceedings might have a bearing, whether for good or evil, upon the blessed work of the Holy Spirit then prevailing in the country and extending in all directions. If they anticipated good from the meeting, they doubtless esteemed it a high privilege to see, hear, and unite their humble prayers with those venerable members of the Commission, with whose characters they had been accustomed to associate all that is excellent and praise-worthy, and whose names they had been taught to pronounce with filial reverence. If they suspected any evil results, or any affliction about to befall their spiritual fathers, whose love had cherished, and whose counsels had guided them; they might desire to be present to extend what sympathy and succor they were able to afford.*

It is true the Council's letter of remonstrance afterwards, detailing the Commission's proceedings, says, "Ministers and exhorters were all ordered to appear

* Rev. Thomas Calhoun, who was one of these young men, says he received a citation to attend, from Mr. Lyle; and he understood that many others received citations from the same. Whence did Mr. Lyle derive his authority to issue these citations? Certainly not from the "warrant" under which the Commission were empowered to act. He must have acted on his own authority. It cannot be possible that the Synod gave Mr. Lyle any secret instructions which they were afraid or ashamed to record on their minutes. Such a supposition would betray something worse than Jesuitism. Mr. Lyle acted however, and the conclusion is inevitable that he took upon himself this responsibility, after having arranged the mode of procedure with the young men.

at their bar." The members of Presbytery were certainly cited by the warrant of the Commission. It is more than probable, however, that the young men were not called for until after the meeting was organized, and it had been ascertained that several of them were present. Therefore the Council's phrase "ordered to appear," will apply equally to the original citation of the Presbyters, and the subsequent call for the young men.

The first business of the Commission was the case of Mr. Hawe, which, so far as may be proper for this work, will be noticed in another place. The next was the censures and ordinations by Cumberland Presbytery which appear to have occupied three days. In fact, this was the principle business of the meeting, and the main object of its appointment by the Synod. Now commence the series of those tyrannical proceedings, never before nor since known in the history of Presbyterianism, and without the shadow of authority in its form of government. The Commission first resolved to examine all those who had been licensed and ordained by the Cumberland Presbytery, in order to determine whether they were classically and doctrinally qualified for their duties. There is often force in a figure, be it ever so homely. And so novel and unreasonable a demand must carry with it all the weight of absurdities which must necessarily attach to the mechanic who should go to the shop of his neighbor, resolved to examine the journeymen and apprentices there employed to satisfy himself with regard to their fitness for the exercise of their trade.

This presumptuous intermeddling, this unlawful encroachment upon the rights of the Presbytery, was treated with more respect than it deserved, inasmuch as it involved a question too absurd to be debateable among sound Presbyterians. The members of Presbytery, however, in a dignified but decided manner, refused submission to the Commission's insolent resolution, correctly arguing that the constitution had assigned to them the duty as Presbyters, and guaranteed to them the right exclusively to examine and license these men for the holy ministry; also to ordain, install, and judge ministers; that the Commission had not, except in the Presbyteries to which they severally belonged, nor could the Synod give them any such right of control over the ordained ministers, licentiates, and candidates of this Presbytery. Consequently they concluded that submission to so arbitrary and unjust a demand, would be nothing less than a betrayal of the sacred trust which God and the constitution of the church had committed to their hands.

This refusal produced much altercation. Well might a holy indignation have been stirred in the minds of these men of God, when required to do what their consciences forbade; but neither the earnest exhortations nor solemn adjurations of a whole day could induce them to become recreant to their trust. Mr. Ewing, being one of the young men, though the first ordained and most distinguished among them, took but little part in the argument, leaving the cause principally to his fathers in the ministry. This was very prudent and

proper, seeing he was one of those said to have been "irregularly licensed and ordained." Mr. Hutchinson who was present, says he made occasional remarks, the cogency and sarcasm of which produced now and then a little confusion of faces. Whatever may have been the nature of his remarks, their force must have been felt, since from that day to this, "*Finis Ewing was the spokesman of the young men,*" has become a kind of *classical* and current expression, and is found in Dr. Davidson's history.*

The Commission finding they could not prevail with the members of the Presbytery, had recourse to a resolution, solemnly adjuring the young men to come forward and submit to an examination. Did they think these young men had never read the Confession, and consequently were ignorant of the rights secured to themselves and their Presbytery? Did they suppose those who had promised to submit themselves in the Lord, to the government of their Presbytery, would yield what their Presbytery, for conscience sake, had just refused? Could they imagine, while the storm of ecclesiastical severity was brooding over all, that the sons would escape its lesser threatenings, by exposing their fathers to its greater violence? Did they suppose these individuals had no understanding to direct, no principles to regulate, no consciences to govern their decision? They may have supposed that many of those bashful, blushing youths who would tremble at the frown, and become bathed in tears at the rebuke of a Commis-

sioner, had not the moral courage to resist the mandate of those who said to them, "we have come, clothed with full Synodical powers; you are arraigned at our bar; you *must* submit.

The two parties were now in the position of De Vio Cajetan and Luther, when the former after his truly mortifying defeat by the latter, could only clamor, "retract! retract!" So the Commission, after their no less mortifying defeat in the argument on Presbyterian rights and duties, could only adjure the recusants to "submit!" But they had mistaken their men. They had over estimated their own power and influence; and undervalued the intelligence of men who well knew what rights and duties were assigned by the constitution of the church. They understood not the feelings of those who believed themselves "called of God," as was Aaron, and were ready to cry, with the Apostle, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!" They seem not to have appreciated the already awakened sympathies and unshaken resolutions of those who were constantly witnessing a vast extent of country now filled or rapidly filling up with a population, destitute of the precious gospel, and saying to them, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

The Commission proceeded, by formal resolution, to adjure the majority of Cumberland Presbytery and all the young men licensed and ordained, "to submit to the authority which God has established in his church, and with which this Commission is clothed." * Indeed!

* Smith, p 608

Did they imagine they were clothed with, and guided by divine authority, when they adjured men to do what, for conscience sake, they felt constrained to refuse? A sentiment is found in a note on page 238 of Davidson's history which, notwithstanding its application to a forced inference there, is in itself too excellent and applicable to be omitted here. It is as follows: "The wildest enthusiast may justify himself in the same way. We have no promise of guidance when we presumptuously leave the path of duty." Had the Commission acted upon this sentiment, they might have escaped the frowns of posterity.

When, after the refusal of the Presbytery, the young men were again adjured to submit, Rev. Finis Ewing arose and said, "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. We therefore request that we be permitted to retire to ask counsel of the Most High, before we give our answer." Some members of the Commission strenuously opposed compliance with this request.* Were they clothed with the authority of God, who opposed asking wisdom of God? Were they under the divine

* The writer has been informed by several persons who were present, that Mr. Lyle was the one who first and most strenuously opposed compliance. But after he was overruled he submitted with great abundance of tears. Samuel K. Blythe said they were hypocritical tears. This young gentleman was a brother of Rev. James Blythe, D. D. of Lexington, Ky. He was sent on a circuit with Thomas Calhoun, seemed devoted to the work and was useful. Dr. Blythe insisting, if his younger brother was to be a preacher, that he should be educated, offered to instruct him. Samuel gladly availed himself of this kind offer, and took up his abode with his brother. The Doctor however undertook to cure him of "the exception to fatality

guidance, while presumptuously leaving the path of duty? One of the members, much to his own credit and to the honor of our holy religion, expostulated on the unreasonableness of this opposition; and the request was finally granted.

They retired. Mr. Hutchinson, who was present and retired at the same time, states the following.

All repaired separately and alone to the silent grove, where they were completely out of sight of each other, but perhaps not entirely out of hearing. I also was alone; while some were on my right, and some on my left. I remember for a few minutes, there was a profound silence. Then faint whispers and low murmurs were heard, then sighs. Next sounds reached my ears, resembling groanings, which cannot be uttered: they seemed like the suppressed cries of men, wrestling in an agony of prayer. Never while I live, can I forget that scene. It did seem that heaven and earth, never before nor since, came so near each other. It did seem that our young friends had approached very, very near to a throne of grace, and were almost talking and counseling

as taught in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church." Many and tedious arguments ensued. The Doctor at length became so urgent on the subject, that Samuel told him, "if the Bible taught the doctrine for which he was contending, it could not be a revelation from God. And if he should find there a doctrine, so contradictory to the benevolence of God and the law revealed for man's government he would throw away the book, as a cunningly devised fable." Dr. Blythe turned to Samuel and said, "I would advise you to go back to southern Kentucky, and preach under the auspices of old father Hodge." This account was given by Samuel K. Blythe himself, to Rev. Thomas Calhoun and others.

face to face, with our Father in heaven. I love to think of that time and that place. It is a hallowed place. It will ever be dear to memory. I had all along acted for the revival and with the majority of the Presbytery, because I felt assured they were right. Seeing a Commission of venerable and good men arrayed in opposition and listening to their solemn appeals, I thought it necessary to pray submissively and inquire solemnly of the Lord, whether we all might not have been wrong. I was glad when Mr. Ewing asked this privilege. My heart was afflicted; and I said, now O Lord lead me and guide me. And my feeling truly was, thy will be done. I did not know but some or even all of the young men might submit. My prayer was that the Lord might guide them to this, if it was according to his holy will. I thought, "the Lord reigns;" and then how I did rejoice. I arose strengthened and refreshed from my knees, saying, "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with us, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedest us." I felt that God would carry on his glorious work, by means of his chosen instruments, his blessed name be honored and precious souls saved: and this was enough. As I came out of the woods, I saw the young men were repairing to the house. Mr. Ewing came out of the thicket near my path. He saw me not. With head erect, his eyes were fixed on vacancy or cast towards heaven. His hands were pressed upon his bosom, as if to hold a heart from breaking. His cheeks, lately so blooming, were pale as death. His step was slow but firm; and his whole air and manner

indicated a decision and energy that would not allow him to yield to the injustice of men, because he feared his God. I saw plainly that he had settled the question in the fear of God. I felt assured that he would stand by the revival and the young men; or if all forsook him, he would not forsake the glorious cause to which he had devoted his life, and in which his labors had been so signally blessed. Whatever might happen I rejoiced at the thought that we would certainly have at least one preacher who would always remain true to God and his gracious work; and that one was Finis Ewing, even a host in himself, God blessing him as in times past. As he passed into the house, I thought how great is God, who can mould vile clay into so noble a form, after his own image! How incomprehensible but adorable must be the Infinite Spirit, who can breathe upon finite spirits the humility to yield to truth and duty, but the courage to withstand all the opposition thereto which earth and hell can array.

On the return of the young men to the house, the Moderator of the Commission, after solemnly adjuring them to submit to a re-examination, proceeded to put the question to them severally: "Do you submit, or not submit?" Very respectfully but decidedly all refused to submit, except two, who requested further time for consideration. This was granted. These two, however, on being called, refused to submit. All assigned substantially the same reasons: "That they believed the Cumberland Presbytery was a regular church judicatory, and competent to judge of the faith and abilities of its

candidates. That they themselves had not been charged with heresy or immorality, and if they had, the Presbytery would have been the proper judicature to have called them to account." Mr. Hutchinson says that Mr. Ewing stated his reasons briefly, but so tersely and conclusively, that they formed an argument which seemed irresistible, and, he believes, carried conviction to nearly all present except the Commission.

Davidson gives the decision at length, from which the following extract is relevant to this case : "the Commission of Synod prohibit, and they do hereby solemnly prohibit, the said persons from exhorting, preaching, and administering ordinances in consequences of any authority which they have obtained from the Cumberland Presbytery, until they submit to our jurisdiction, and undergo the requisite examination." * The names of "the said persons" have already been given in this chapter. But as the revival was extending in all directions, and the Commission were anxious to do their work thoroughly, their decision thus includes and cuts off the absent, who had not been charged with wrong nor cited to attend, and consequently had had no opportunity to refuse or comply with their demands.

"And it is further resolved, that the following persons, viz : James Farr, Lawrence Rollinson, Robert Houston, James Crawford, Reuben Dooley, Robert Wilson, James Duggins, Michael Findley, Ephraim McLean, John Hodge, Alexander Chapman, William McClure, Stephen Clinton, and William Moore, who are now absent,

* Page 239.

together with James Hawe, be laid under the same prohibition." *

The reason assigned in the decision for this prohibition is because "it being proclaimed by common fame that the majority of these men are not only illiterate, but erroneous in sentiment." Nevertheless *all* whether present or absent, whether literate or illiterate, were silenced. Doubtless Craighead, Balch, Bowman, worldlings and infidels had widely proclaimed all this, and even more, too absurd for belief. The error in doctrine was the single exception to *fatality*, which many ministers have been permitted to make on their licensure and ordination: It was nothing new or strange to Presbyterianism. Smith notices that some of these men never had been licensed to preach; and he argues that their calling upon them to submit to examination as well as their prohibiting them to preach the gospel is of a piece with the other "decisive measures" of that body.†

Did ever so large a body of the ministers of Jesus Christ, in the space of nine days, commit so many intolerable blunders, and not only violate the constitution of the church to which they belonged, but actually transcend the very warrant giving them power to act, as well as prescribing and limiting their action? If modern history furnishes a parallel case, it will probably be found only in the acts of the Spanish Inquisition or the Scottish Moderates, so called.

That the reader may be fully convinced that the Commission's business, assigned to them by the Synod

* Dav. His. pp. 239 and 240.

† Note, p. 609.

in session, was alone with the Presbytery, and that no authority whatever was given them to call individuals to account—much less to demand the re-examination of ordained ministers, as well as of licentiates and candidates under the care of Presbytery—the warrant under which they were empowered to act, and by which their duties were defined, is here submitted. The reader will please attentively consider it in the note below.* It need only be said that the very same men appear a good deal wiser, more consistent and less influenced by party spirit, when acting in session as a Synod than when acting as a Commission. They, as a Synod, prescribed the business for themselves, as a Commission. If, in their latter capacity, an increasing party spirit should stimulate them to exceed and overreach the authority which they had prescribed to themselves, in the former, they knew how to dispose of the

* On motion, resolved, That the business of Cumberland Presbytery be again taken up. After considerable deliberation, it was resolved, that Rev. John Lyle, John P. Campbell, Archibald Cameron, Joseph P. Howe, Samuel Rennals, Robert Stuart, Joshua L. Wilson, Robert Wilson, Thomas Cleland, and Isaac Tull, together with Messrs. William McDowell, Robert Brank, James Allen, James Henderson, Richard Gaines, and Andrew Wallace, ruling elders, or any seven ministers of them, with as many elders as may be present, be a Commission, vested with full Synodical power, to confer with the members of Cumberland Presbytery, and adjudicate on their Presbyterial proceedings, which appear upon the minutes of said Presbytery, for the purpose aforesaid, and taken notice of by the committee appointed by Synod to examine said minutes; that the said Commission meet on the first Tuesday in December next, at Gasper meeting house, Logan county, in the bounds of said Presbytery, for the purpose aforesaid. That notice be given to the members

case, and escape their own censure: in Synod they would act as the judges of whatever errors they might be tempted to commit in a Commission. There was an advantage in having their number so large, consisting of the strength and influence of the Kentucky Synod. And of their advantage, they took good care to avail themselves. For when the General Assembly afterwards inflicted a mild censure upon them, by pronouncing these very proceedings "at least of questionable regularity," and recommending a review and a mitigation of the sufferings caused by them; they did promptly review, but just as boldly re-affirm. Can any one believe that this would have been the case, if the judges themselves had not been the very persons whose proceedings were judged? Prejudice is said to be blind. Equally so is party spirit. And by these two causes, the mental vision of even good men is liable to become blurred. And those composing this Commission have

of said Presbytery, by the Stated Clerk of Synod, to attend on the day and the place aforesaid, so that a full, fair, and friendly investigation may take place. That the said Commission take into consideration and decide upon a letter from Rev. Thomas B. Craighead and others, and an appeal from the judgment of said Presbytery, by certain members of Shiloh congregation, and that the Stated Clerk of Synod furnish the Commission aforesaid with the papers and documents relative to the whole of the aforesaid proceedings.

The Stated Clerk of Synod, together with Messrs. Lyle, Donald, and Dickey were individually directed to use all necessary exertions in citing the members of Cumberland Presbytery to attend the above mentioned meeting of the Commission of Synod, and especially that written citations be sent by the Stated Clerk of Synod to the Moderator of said Presbytery, and to Rev. James McGready.

Minutes of Synod, vol. 1, pages 78--79, as given by Dr. Davidson.

always been regarded as good men; and their names must ever be dear to piety as well as Presbyterianism. Had they been bad men, or men of equivocal harmlessness, their violation of the constitution of the church, their transcendence, as a Commission, of their own warrant, as a Synod, and their persistence in re-affirming and justifying the same, might have been readily accounted for. But what is to be said on the admission of their indubitable piety? Let any sound Presbyterian review their proceedings from beginning to end, in the light and love of evangelism, and find for their conduct, if he can, any better palliation than prejudice and party spirit.

Probably these good men had been favored with but little experience in revivals. Certainly they had never known a work in which the number of trophies of divine grace, or whose power and extent could compare with that then in progress. It may be that the New Light excitement was as much of a general awakening as most of them had ever experienced; and if they took that as a specimen, they needed not the efforts of Craighead, Balch and Bowman to set their faces and hearts against awakenings in general. They failed to distinguish between the revival of precious truth and a revival of obsolete errors. They forgot to consider that the former is established on God's holy word, while the latter is built up only on the speculations and delusions of men. Confounding the one with the other, and believing both equally unsound and ephemeral, they doubtless thought they would do God service by lending a hand to put a

speedy end to their lawless existence. Had they remembered that there is truth which awakens to sanctify, as well as error, which excites only to deceive—that the sure word of prophecy points to Heaven, while its perversion leads down to hell—their action would have been very different. In that case they might have foreseen what has actually come to pass. After about half a century, the New Lights, having dwindled down to a mere handful, in order to save their sect from a lingering death, have taken refuge among the Campbellites; while the Cumberland Presbyterians are enjoying more revivals, and higher prosperity than any other branch of the Presbyterian family.

It is surely a little remarkable that the Commission, who, without process or form of trial, silenced so many of the revival preachers against whom no charge of heresy or immorality had ever been preferred, acquitted Craighead, an inveterate opposer of the gracious work, after a brief trial for heresy. They doubtless set a higher value on that man of brilliant talents, that staunch champion of orthodoxy and order, than on dozens of such men as Ewing, King, or even McGready and Hodge. But even then, hundreds of judicious persons, who well knew all the men, placed a very different estimate on their comparative aptness to teach the way of salvation; and many would have preferred to listen to the discourses of the weakest of those humble preachers and exhorters who had just been silenced. Time has justified this preference, and con-

vinced the western churches that something more than profound learning and brilliant talents must be necessary to success and usefulness in the ministry. Dr. Craighead, though once so great a favorite, and now acquitted of heresy, from this time became an eyesore, and continued an annoyance to the Presbyterian church for nearly twenty years. His example, and especially his influence, give force to the exhortation, "Let no man glory in men."

CHAPTER XII.

THE COUNCIL: FROM ITS FORMATION TO ITS DISSOLUTION.

Party triumph — Presumption of Craighead — Pelagianism opposed — State of the country — Former supplies — Cut off — Love to the Church — Trust in God — Present supplies — Joy of the People — Regard for Ewing — His duties — Overtures for peace — “*Divide et impera*” — McGready and Hodge — The alternative — Resolutions — Ewing, King, &c. — Determinations — Painful to part — Hodge’s regret — McGready’s counsel — Debate — Ewing triumphs over Hodge — Withdrawals — The difficulty — What it was not — What it really was — Necessary to Synod’s justification — Lyle’s tears — Embarrassment — Form into a Committee — To meet in March.

THE proceedings in relation to Cumberland Presbytery, and some other business of minor importance, being concluded, the Commission adjourned on the 11th of December. They had taken upon themselves a fearful responsibility; and their acts may have a bearing on the Church of God to the end of time. They had cited five of the oldest revival ministers to appear at the next Synod to answer for enterprising to prevent the re-examination of the young men; and they had cited four of these five to answer to the charge of holding certain errors in doctrine. They had summarily silenced four ordained ministers, all the licentiates and candidates, whether present or absent, whether learned or less learned, for not submitting themselves, when called on, to their unprecedented demand for re-examination. They

had acquitted Craighead,* whose opposition to that change from nature to grace, so strenuously insisted on by the revival party, is believed to have been the grand moving cause of all these difficulties.

The battle had been fought and the victory won. The revival party were oppressed and humbled to the dust; while the anti-revivalists had gained a signal triumph, not only by the censures passed upon the opposite party but by the acquittal of their leader and head. The strife of years had been crowned with success; and the real objects of party spirit had arrived at their final consummation. Doubtless they flattered themselves that this great ado about religion, and this noise about making sure work for eternity, would now cease, as a matter of course. And they may have hoped to regain that influence and popularity which they had enjoyed before the churches and the country became awakened from their spiritual dearth and deadness.

Dr. Craighead must have contemplated the state of affairs, especially his late success, with peculiar self-complacency. He saw, as many others did, his great influence with the wisest and best men belonging to the Kentucky Synod; and becoming elated with the fact, he was shortly after emboldened to broach a new theory which

* "Mr. Craighead had been charged by common fame as denying the doctrines of election, and the special operations of the Spirit of God in conversion. He was examined on these points, the questions and answers being in writing, and his answers were pronounced agreeable to the Confession, a few ambiguous and unsatisfactory expressions excepted." Dav. His. p. 242.

appears even then to have been in the progress of development. Possessing a turn of mind, rather speculative than logical, and probably seeing with what skill and cogency even the young men, whose powers he despised, could wield arguments against fatality, he began to vacillate between opposing theories, until he became mired in Pelagianism. He doubtless thought his high standing and especially his unbounded influence with his brethren, would give his new fangled system, when enforced by his powers of argument and eloquence, popularity and currency. But he was mistaken. The good ministers of Kentucky Synod could be induced to follow him no further. They loved the truth too well, as they understood it. What though he and his party carried them triumphantly through their late contest against the revival and its promoters? That had been done under very different circumstances; the contest itself was against men and measures; and it was carried through by means of prejudice and party spirit. But this Pelagian system proposed to wage war against precious truth; and the existing prejudice and party spirit were directly in opposition to that error. It is smooth sailing on a flowing stream; but to stem the current or change its course is altogether another affair. Besides great and good men will ever be disposed to investigate the doctrines proposed for their embracement, calmly, dispassionately, and in the light of God's revelation; and it is not easy to induce them to take poison, even though it be presented in a gilded cup. With the same enlightened zeal, love of truth, and tenacity of purpose which

led the young men of Cumberland Presbytery to resist the doctrine of fatality which they thought was involved in the doctrine of eternal election and reprobation, did all the Commission and the Synod generally afterwards oppose Craighead's Pelagianism. They withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. They triumphed. They suspended and, in 1811, deposed him. After many ineffectual attempts to be restored, he obtained his object, in 1824, not long before his death.

But after the silencing of all the young men, whether ordained, licensed, or exhorters, what was to become of the country, the congregations, the destitute neighborhoods, the new settlements throughout all which the revival was prevailing—or to use Mr. Hutchinson's graphic figure—spreading like fire in the dry stubble? The state of the country now, was not such as it was, when McGready began to preach and enforce the duty of faith, repentance, and regeneration; and Balch opposed and ridiculed these doctrines. Soon after the revival commenced, it was found that the ministers could not, by their utmost exertions, supply one-third of the field already white for the harvest. It was soon made manifest, too, that only five of the ministers of the Presbytery within whose bounds the gracious work prevailed, were willing to co-operate and aid in its promotion. The spiritual wants of the people, and the scarcity of religious teachers, led to the selection, first by Transylvania, and afterwards by Cumberland Presbytery, from among the fruits of the revival, of certain

young men to go forth, exhort and instruct the people in the way of salvation. And it did seem that God, by his providence and grace, was raising up a supply for the destitutions of Zion. For as the good work extended, there was found in almost every congregation one or more influential, intelligent and pious young men, who felt impressed with the duty of exercising their gifts for the edification of saints, and warning of sinners; and the labors of some of these had already been signally blessed. As the tide of immigration flowed into the Mississippi valley, calls for the preached word had become more loud and frequent, and the number of preachers and exhorters had increased. Some of these had purchased to themselves a good degree: some having been licensed, and others ordained.

Now the congregations were greatly multiplied, and many destitutions supplied by the labors of these young itinerants, who, having their districts assigned them, were accustomed to hold one or more meetings every day. But these supplies were now all to be cut off, the young men being prohibited from preaching, exhorting, and administering the ordinances. While through a vast extent of territory, which was soon to constitute new States, the people of numerous congregations and neighborhoods were looking to the revival ministers for a supply of that spiritual food for which they were hungering, the Commission at a blow had reduced the supplies to five old ministers, the same which the revival had found in the field years before.

What were these ministers to do? What ought they

to have done? Doubtless many, acquainted with the circumstances in relation to the origin of the Presbyterian and some other churches, on their reformation from Popery, will decide that they ought immediately to have constituted a new and separate Presbytery; and that the guilt of schism would necessarily have attached to the body whose tyrannical and unconstitutional proceedings had forced them to this justifiable secession.

But they all loved the Presbyterian church; and all their sympathies and sentiments relative to doctrines — with one exception — and government centred in Presbyterianism. They could not bear the thought of schism. The ties which bound them were too tender to be touched, yet too strong to be broken. Secession from a body so long loved and cherished, was out of the question. They remembered that “the Lord reigns,” and if they continued to order their cause aright before him, he would incline all their enemies to be at peace with them. He would provide a way for their return to the Presbyterian church on equitable principles; or if it was his will otherwise to dispose of them, his providence would guide their way. It might be the purpose of a righteous Sovereign to try them in the furnace of affliction, to humble them in the dust of dependence, to bring strength out of their weakness, and glory to himself out of their degradation. He might vouchsafe to make their extremity his own opportunity to bless, to renew their spiritual strength, enlarge their sphere of usefulness, get to himself a great name, subdue the hearts of the people by his

victorious grace, and make "this land that was desolate become like the garden of Eden." For "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

They could trust God, and await the indications of his providence. They fully believed in the justice of their cause and deeply felt the injustice with which they had been treated. They could not doubt their grievances would be redressed, at all events by the General Assembly, should it become necessary to carry their case before that body. They entertained hopes, however, seeing that the Commission's proceedings were obviously unconstitutional, and the body appointing them contained many excellent men, that the Kentucky Synod would in a calm review of the case, retract or at least modify, in a manner which might be acceptable and restore peace, without the sacrifice of principle. Such was the calculation of unsophisticated minds.

They forgot that when so large a body of men, clothed with ecclesiastical power, have, in the heat of excitement, publicly committed themselves, and staked their character and principles upon a wrong measure, they almost always find more inducements for attempting a public justification, than for making a public recantation. They did not reflect that human nature is so constituted, that it is incomparably easier for a body of men to be betrayed by prejudice, passion, and party spirit into error, than for the same individuals, religiously reviewing their ill-advised course, to make due reparation. Numbers, caught in the same dilemma, strengthen

and stimulate one another. Tender and uneasy consciences are apt to be smoothed down, and smothered by the arguments or acrimony of those who are less susceptible of compunctious visitings. Time has proved that the revival ministers had no reason to hope for redress from the Kentucky Synod, but has made their meekness and forbearance sufficiently manifest to be known and read of all men.

Noble-hearted, pure-minded men ! being reviled, ye could bless ; being persecuted, ye could suffer it ; being defamed, ye could entreat. Had you been taught in any other than the school of Him “ who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; ” it would have been otherwise. Y^er ardently desired peace and fellowship even with your undisguised persecutors, that you might serve your God acceptably, your generation nobly. Posterity will honor you. The church of God in after ages will bless you, knowing that yours was “ the wisdom that is from above, first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. ” *

But in view of the spiritual necessities of the people, the religious state of the country, and the glorious work then in progress, growing and extending every day, what was to be done ? This was a question of more than life or death. It involved all that is dear to the hearts of Christian men and ministers. It must be met and fully answered. It could not be postponed. It must be decided immediately ; but how ? It could only

* James iii, 17.

be decided, as was done by Peter and the other Apostles, in a similar case : “ we ought to obey God rather than men.”

Accordingly, after mature deliberation, they concluded as far as possible to afford to the people the usual ministerial supplies. And to do this more effectually and systematically they resolved to form themselves into a Council, consisting of the ministers, elders, and representatives from vacant congregations, who had all along sympathized and acted with the majority of Cumberland Presbytery. This, they believed to be a duty which God required, and which they could not neglect. But that they might neither give offence to the Kentucky Synod, nor excite the jealousy of their opponents, nor afford occasion to the tongue of slander to wound the blessed cause, by assailing their motives ; they agreed that their only end and aim should be, while in their present unhappy situation, to supply the church and country with the word and ordinances, avoiding all acts which properly belonged to a Presbytery. More than this they could not do, without displeasing their opposing brethren and their party ; less than this they dared not attempt, lest they should offend their divine Master and gracious Lord.

Convinced that the Commission's prohibitions were not only palpably illegal, but actually null and void, they resolved to disregard them. They determined to preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances as heretofore ; and they encouraged all the young men to exercise their respective functions. All not only con-

sented, but rejoiced in being permitted to do so; and they were soon dispatched on their errands of love and mercy, to the destitute and perishing. Wherever they went, they were greeted with unusual kindness, their visits were hailed with almost universal joy; and their labors were attended with abundant blessings. The members of all the churches, except the few who had opposed the revival from the first, had witnessed at a distance the rising storm; they had trembled in view of its probable effects; but when those, through whose instrumentality, so many of them had learned to fear God and work righteousness, returned, they were filled with joy almost unbounded. All parts of the country which had been previously visited by these young men, received them with similar demonstrations of approbation. Not only inquirers and Bible readers generally, but in many instances, worldlings and infidels who had at first opposed, learning the state of affairs, now countenanced and encouraged the revival. So true it is, that mankind generally abhor unprovoked tyranny and injustice; and without arguing the metaphysical question of "*a moral sense*;" experience proves that the "sober second thought" of an enlightened people, more frequently than otherwise, will decide in favor of the right.

Mr. Ewing had labored on his circuit until the Presbytery next preceding the meeting of the Commission. His indefatigable zeal and extraordinary success had become known throughout the bounds of the revival. Among the favorers of the good work, he had become a

universal favorite; among its opposers an object of dread, scarcely less perhaps than McGready or Hodge. Wherever he went, he seemed to carry a torch of divine light, before which fled the darkness of ignorance and death-like insensibility. Crowds attended his ministrations. Multitudes could tell, and gratefully did tell, of his solemn appeals, his affectionate warnings, his tender sympathies for the distressed, his sweet gospel encouragements to the truly penitent, and his heart-felt rejoicings with those whom grace had delivered from the bondage of sin. All loved him for his works' sake. At last his talents and learning began to be duly appreciated. Those who had once caviled at his comparatively slender advantages for education, were now cautious about making this objection, lest a comparison should be made, not altogether creditable to themselves and others who had enjoyed all the privileges of collegiate training. Even then many intelligent persons ranked him with the first pulpit orators of the age and country in which he labored.

The Presbytery had assigned to him no circuit, but a field of labor similar to that occupied by the older ministers. There were however these differences: he was a younger and more robust man; he had been accustomed to the life of an itinerant; his wordly circumstances were more free from embarrassment; his farm and domestic concerns could be managed in his absence, and thus enable him to devote his whole time to the work of the ministry. His business was, with other ordained ministers, to conduct the sacramental and

camp meetings, to attend to instruction and discipline in the many vacancies, exercise a general superintendence over the affairs of the various circuits, and be ready to go wherever the services of an ordained minister were specially needed. These and other duties he continued to discharge to the entire satisfaction of all the friends of the revival, whether in his own or other churches, until the Council was dissolved, and the Cumberland Presbyterian church constituted. None were, none could be more diligent in labor, or more ready to sacrifice comfort, ease, or worldly interest for the welfare of men and the glory of God.

It would seem that not only Mr. Ewing, but the other young men strictly followed the Apostle's instructions, and could say, "having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether ministry, let us wait on our ministering : or he that teacheth, on teaching : or he that exhorteth, on exhortation." It may also be truly said, "they were kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love ; in honor preferring one another ; .not slothful in business ; fervent in spirit ; serving the Lord ; rejoicing in hope ; patient in tribulation ; continuing instant in prayer." *

It belongs more properly to the ecclesiastical historian to detail the proceedings of the Council. To the pious reader their acts will present interesting topics for contemplation, particularly their several overtures for peace and reconciliation, especially with the Kentucky Synod. That body, knowing that the General Assembly

* Rom. xli, 7-12,

seriously questioned the regularity of their proceedings ; that other denominations as well as the world in general condemned them ; beginning perhaps to be not altogether satisfied with themselves ; and at the same time aware that they had staked their own and the church's reputation on the results, seemed exceedingly anxious to justify themselves. Under the impression probably that the submission of the recusants to the demands of the Commission would give a kind of eclat to their acts, and thus afford a better justification than would otherwise ever be obtained ; they invited "friendly conferences," with a view doubtless of drawing some to that submission which all had repeatedly refused. The Pope's policy always was, and still is, "*divide et impera*:" divide and conquer.

Messrs. McGready and Hodge sincerely loved, and had grown old in the Presbyterian church. Their joy at the ushering in of the great revival, and their desire to advance the interests of that church and of precious souls, had led to the adoption of measures in Presbytery, which were wise and lawful under the circumstances, but which from the first had been opposed by those who had also opposed the revival and the doctrine of regeneration, This opposition they had religiously withstood, until taking advantage of certain incidental circumstances, it had now gathered strength sufficient to reduce them, by overstrained ecclesiastical authority, to a painful alternative : either of submitting to injustice, or of separating from the church of their choice. They could humble themselves for Christ and the gospel's sake, to

the injustice, in order to avoid the separation. But this, they well knew, the young men could not do; they ought not. Excepting, as they had done from the first, to the doctrine, in their view involving fatality, and refusing to betray the rights of Presbytery to lawless usurpation, *their* course was plain. If the Kentucky Synod would not indulge their conscientious scruples, their separation would become not only necessary but inevitable. The well-known temperament of the men composing that body and the influence of their heartless opponents with them, left to Mr. McGready very little hope, after the Commission had done their doughty work. Mr. Hodge, however, hoping against hope, continued for years to stand by the young men and labor in the blessed work which seemed to be extending every where, and filling the churches with new and living converts. Messrs. Ewing, King, and the young men generally, being steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, were determined at all events never to abandon the gracious work then in progress. They could labor, sacrifice, and suffer; but one thing appeared to those true hearts utterly impossible: they could not desert the revival which, under God, had done so much for themselves, and enabled them to do so much for their fellow men. Compliance with the terms, insisted on by Kentucky Synod and Transylvania Presbytery, in all their conferences,—even after the General Assembly had been *surprised* into an unrighteous decision in their case—was not to be thought of for a single moment. This appeared to them no less than the abandonment of

the Lord's precious cause, the immortal souls for whom they were laboring, and the sacred principles they had adopted on entering the ministry; and for the sake of which they had forsaken all else, and consecrated themselves to the service of God and his Church.

These views and determinations were no secret to Messrs. McGready and Hodge. But in whatever light they may have considered them, they appear to have had too much respect for the rights of conscience to justify the Synod's strenuous demand, and too high regard for the young men's honest scruples, to condemn their positive refusal. After the decision of the General Assembly, in 1809, they more especially apprehended a separation would be the probable result. But how could they bear to part with these, their sons in the gospel, dearly beloved and longed for, their joy and their crown? It seemed to both parties almost like tearing the chords of life asunder. They had wept, prayed, labored, sacrificed and suffered together, some of them for many years. They had witnessed the power of grace to conquer the most stubborn and rebellious hearts. They had seen the hypocrite detected, the backslider reclaimed, the formalist awakened, the scoffer made to weep, the swearer to pray, the drunkard and gambler abandon the haunt of revelry for the house of God, the despiser exchange infidelity for Christianity, and many thousands of moralists seek and find mercy through the blood of the atonement. They had seen the revival, appearing first in Logan county, now extending through almost all the settled parts of the Mississippi

valley, and camp meetings, to which the necessities of a new country had given rise, now being held in many States, old as well as new.

There is abundant reason to believe that Messrs McGready and Hodge, continued their sympathies and prayers in behalf of the revival, the young men and the church which they constituted, even to the close of their lives. After their withdrawal from the Council however, though they continued to preach to their people, they had to lament the want of that heavenly unction and glorious success which attended their ministrations in former days. This statement is made with respect to Mr. McGready, on the authority of Smith.* With respect to Mr. Hodge, Mr. Hutchinson says, "several years after the constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, old Father Hodge spent a few days with me. We had much conversation about the affairs of the Council; and he distinctly made the impression on my mind that he really regretted, that he did not stand up to the young men, and go along with the revival." Shortly before his death, Mr. McGready said to some of the leading members of his congregation — he having removed to take charge of some congregations in Henderson, on the Ohio river — "Brethren, when I am dead and gone, the Cumberland Presbyterians will come among you and occupy this field; go with them they are the people of God." Davidsons says, "After his decease the bulk of his congregation joined the Cumberland Presbyterians." †

* P. 615.

† P. 261. Smith P. 636.

Mr. McGready did not meet with the Council after the adjournment of the Commission, in 1805; his removal shortly after having placed him at a distance from the scene of action; but he did not return to Transylvania Presbytery, until 1809. Mr. Hodge, however, continued to be a leading member of the Council until the meeting at Shiloh, in October, 1809. At a previous meeting, the Council had appointed Rev. William Hodge and Thomas Donnel, elder, to offer certain terms of peace and reconciliation; and they had resolved "that unless the Synod acceded to their propositions, they would on this day constitute into a Presbytery." After these propositions had been rejected, Mr. Hodge who had made terms of reconciliation for himself and others who might think proper to go with him, but very different from the terms offered by the Council, argued that he had obtained terms substantially the same. This led to a protracted debate, involving all the points of difference, especially the rights of Presbytery and the doctrine of fatality. Messrs. Hodge and Ewing were the principal speakers. Mr. Hutchinson says, "if Finis Ewing could not convince Father Hodge, he certainly confuted him; and he carried conviction to the minds of the elders and representatives. It was acknowledged generally, not only that he had truth and reason on his side, but that he was quite too hard for Mr. Hodge in strength and clearness of argument."

The vote of the Council decided this question — whether the Synod had complied with their propositions — by a large majority, in the negative. The vote, whether,

according to the resolution of the last Council, they should now constitute into a Presbytery, was taken and decided in the affirmative, by a large majority. Whereupon, Rev. Wm. Hodge, his nephew Samuel Hodge, and Thomas Donnell, elder, withdrew. The Messrs. Hodge, and Thomas Nelson were soon restored to the Transylvania Presbytery; the licensure and ordination of the two young men by Cumberland Presbytery, being recognized and confirmed, on their submitting to an examination on divinity. Smith argues, as the literary attainments of Samuel Hodge were inferior to those of most of the young men licensed and ordained by Cumberland Presbytery, that the only serious difficulty was the rejection by the members of the Council, of what they deemed fatality.

With this opinion the writer can by no means concur. It seems abundantly evident that the difficulty was not the exception to fatality: else why have the Presbyterians, before and since, admitted so many to the ministry who have made the same or a similar exception? Nor was it the want of literary qualifications on the part of a majority of the young men, as common fame had reported: else why were all silenced, even those whose literary qualifications had been sustained, on their examination by Presbytery? It is sufficient to instance the case of the licentiate, James B. Porter. The grand difficulty was, in the judgment of the biographer — and it is believed the world and posterity will sustain the sentiment — that the Kentucky Synod, finding that they had been misled by Craighead, Balch, and Bowman, as well as their own prejudice and party spirit, to

the adoption of unauthorized measures which even the General Assembly had censured, as being "at least of questionable regularity," deemed the submission of the young men to their wrong measures indispensable to the justification of their Commission's proceedings. Knowing that Christendom and future generations would test those proceedings by the light of God's word and the discipline of the church, they doubtless thought that submission by the young men might be the most effectual means of smothering any critical investigation; and if any thing could save them from the dreaded censures of the future church, it would be this mode of healing the difficulty. Hence submission, nothing less than unqualified submission, was in all cases demanded, with all the unchangeableness of the laws of the Medes and Persians, notwithstanding this had been again and again refused. On failing to obtain this, when the whole affair was about to meet the scrutiny of the General Assembly, it is not wonderful that Mr. Lyle, "bursting into tears, made a most impassioned appeal,"* that he "wept freely as he portrayed in vivid colors the probable effects of the discomforture and disgrace of"—those whom he termed "the friends of truth and order."† Had he not reason to dread disgrace? Had he not cause for tears? Others of his party had almost, but not quite, as much cause for tears as he. They gained something then; but they lost all and more, in 1816, by the Assembly's decision in the case of the Geneva Presbytery, elsewhere more fully noticed.

* Day. His. p. 119.

† Ib. p. 250.

On the withdrawal of the Messrs. Hodge, Messrs. Wm. McGee, Finis Ewing, and Samuel King, were the only ordained ministers present. Mr. McAdow was absent on account of ill health. Mr. McGee did not feel free then to constitute a Presbytery. This placed the Council in a very embarrassing condition. Mr. Hutchinson says, "Mr. Ewing arose and said, 'brethren, we seem to have become orphans, left to take care of ourselves. We are now at the end of our row. If God do not help us, we are in a sad dilemma; and this glorious revival which God has owned and blessed, must suffer or cease altogether. Still let us labor on and pray without ceasing.' With the exception of a few hours devoted to rest, we spent about a day and a half in prayer to God, that he by his grace would enlighten, and by his providence direct us."

"The Council, together with all the licentiates and candidates present, formed a committee, and entered into a free conversation on the subject before them; when it was fully agreed to, that each ordained minister, licentiate, elder, and representative, should continue in union, and use their influence to keep the societies in union, until the third Friday in March next, and then meet at the Ridge meeting house. After which each shall be released from the bond, unless previous to that time three ordained ministers of the body had constituted a Presbytery." *

* Smith, p. 637.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MINISTER WITH HIS FAMILY.

Communings with himself — With a Christian brother — His domestic relations — Mrs. Ewing — Her character — A dutiful wife — A nursing mother to the church — Why not enjoy home? — He must obey Christ — Dissuasives of worldly wisdom — Infidelity — A crisis anticipated — The sealing ordinances — How to be provided — By co-laborers — Necessity for constituting a separate Presbytery.

AFTER the dissolution of the Council, and the formation of the Committee at Shiloh, Mr. Ewing returned home to spend some days with his family: a longer period of domestic enjoyment than he had indulged in for many years. Here he had leisure to consider the state of affairs, to review the painful past, and forecast the probable future. From Mrs. Ewing's brief account of his exercises at this time, it is quite probable that he soliloquized in a strain much like the following:

“Who am I? A weak and helpless worm, deserving wrath and wretchedness in hell, yet assured of bliss and glory in heaven: a sinner saved by grace. I do, I will love the Lord, for he first loved me; and by his stripes I am healed. I can never love and serve him enough, nor do enough for his cause, his glory, and the souls redeemed by his blood. Though all men forsake

thee, thou Friend of sinners, I cannot, and through thy grace I will not.

“ But what am I? A most unworthy instrument, whose weak efforts God deigns to bless. For unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. As a minister of Christ, I must serve my generation; as a steward of the mysteries of God, I must be found faithful. What though I am made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men? What though I have become a fool for Christ’s sake, the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things unto this day? All this is nothing compared with what my Saviour has suffered for me; and for my reward he has promised a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

“ Why is this dispensation of the gospel committed to me, who am so weak and unworthy; while there are so many others in the country, more gifted and learned, in all respects better qualified for usefulness, if God would give them the grace? Why did not the great Shepherd impress and deal with the hearts of Craighead, Balch, Bowman, Donnell, Templin, and all the members of Kentucky Synod — as he has done with mine — and constrain them all to go forth to feed the poor stray sheep in the wilderness, and break the bread of life to the perishing thousands? Their advantages had been very great, mine comparatively little. They had been educated for the holy ministry, I for a humbler calling. They had been accustomed to feed the church of God,

I to tillage of the ground. True, this gospel must be preached in all the world, for a witness. But why was the necessity laid on me and a few precious youths, some of them as little prepared as I am? Verily God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak to confound the mighty. And we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! This is certain: he is a holy sovereign, and has a right to employ and dispose of all according to his will. I am not to scrutinize but to submit. I must not question but obey. For by the grace of God, I am what I am."

A Christian brother called, in considerable anxiety and distress, supposing that all the young preachers and exhorters were about to abandon their districts, leaving all their charges destitute; and the revival of course must wane and finally become extinct.

"Have we not labored for years," said Mr. Ewing, "in defiance of ecclesiastical prohibitions? And has not God blessed us and prospered his cause more and more, adding many to the churches of such as shall be saved? My brother, I have enlisted, not for a few days, nor for a few years; but for a life-time. I am sure all the young men feel as I do. And now because men revile us, and persecute us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely for Christ's sake, shall we abandon his precious cause? What though the prohibitions of

Kentucky Synod should hang over us forever, shall we not obey God rather than men ? ”

“ Many of the licentiates ought to have been ordained and several candidates licensed years ago : and they would have been, if they had been under the care of any Presbytery, instead of the Council who had resolved to abstain from all Presbyterian acts. That those who are duly qualified may be set apart to the whole work of the ministry, connection with some ecclesiastical body will be necessary. Now how would a union with the Methodists or the Episcopalians meet the views of the brethren ? ”

“ Not at all,” said Mr. Ewing. “ The old church insist that we must necessarily be Arminians, because we except to the fatality involved in the doctrines of eternal election and reprobation. But both the churches you speak of are quite too Arminian for us, notwithstanding the articles of one of them tells a different tale. We must not run into one extreme to avoid the other. Besides, we believe the Presbyterian the only form of church government authorized in the Bible, and no other so well suited to our republican institutions. If we cannot return to the mother church without the sacrifice of truth and a good conscience, we must form a separate Presbytery.”

“ If the number of three ordained ministers should not see it to be their duty to unite in forming a new Presbytery — which I hope and pray may never happen — what then will you do ? ”

“ I cannot tell,” said Mr. Ewing. “ The Lord will

provide : I am sure of that. If we submissively and trustingly seek counsel of him, he will direct us. I cannot doubt, I am sure he is in this glorious work which has been in progress for so many years, and is still extending far and wide ; he will conduct it in his own way ; and employ instrumentalities according to his sovereign will. He has all wisdom to direct, all power over the hearts of men, all grace for strengthening his people. With our Saviour at the helm, our frail bark will move safely on, over the troubled waters. When it pleases him, he can say, ' Peace be still ! and there shall be a great calm.' And we, tempest-tossed on life's rough sea, afraid of every opposing wind, trembling at every angry billow, will anchor safely in the haven of eternal rest. There palms of victory, crowns of glory, and sceptres of righteousness await us. If it is so delightful to worship and serve our divine Master here, what rapturous joy will fill our hearts, when permitted to be forever before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple ? ”

It is believed that few men are susceptible of higher enjoyment of home and in the family circle than was Mr. Ewing. He was truly an affectionate husband, a tender parent, and a kind master. He was in easy circumstances. His farm was very productive : his servants industrious and skillful in its management ; and withal so dutiful and faithful to their master, mistress, and their children, that they almost might be said to rival the best servants of the ancient patriarchs. His little ones were interesting, sprightly, promising, full of

affection to their parents, and constantly developing those amiable precocities which fill parental hearts with joy, pride, and gratitude. It is true, his almost constant absence from home had devolved their mental and moral training principally on their mother. But the father well knew that they could not be under more skillful and faithful guidance.

Mrs. Ewing was a woman of sound judgment, general intelligence and ardent piety. Her fondness for reading, for cultivated society and the ever instructive conversation of her husband had stored her mind with an amount of useful information which few of her sex and age around her had the good fortune to acquire. In the absence of her husband, her time was divided between domestic cares and religious reading. Her skill in farming, managing servants, and arranging her household concerns accomplished her as the helpmate of a man whose whole time was devoted to the service of God and the Church. And when her husband could come home for a day or a night, whether he came alone, or brought little or much company with him — as frequently happened — her joyful recognition, cordial welcome, and affable manners added a peculiar charm to the hospitality which she delighted to afford. She was never unprepared, never taken by surprise, but always ready and rejoiced to entertain the servants and followers of the Lord. In short, Mrs. Ewing had a true woman's tact always to please her husband, excite the admiration of his friends, and make every one comfortable and happy around her. As if by intuition, she anticipated and

provided for the wants of all who favored her with their company.

The husband and the wife were always communicative, always free in the interchange of their thoughts with each other. Whatever interested one could be no secret to the other. The husband was accustomed to breathe forth to his wife all his thoughts and feelings, his doubts and fears, his prospects and discouragements, his joys and sorrows; and her soul of sympathy made them all her own. His interests, friends, religious sentiments, church relations, and plans for glorifying God, were all hers by adoption; and she could have none besides. When he began to be impressed to preach the gospel, she not only acquiesced, but encouraged. When he was appointed to a circuit, she said, "go where duty calls." When his labors were blessed, she rejoiced exceedingly. When he was persecuted and slandered, while she sorrowed and sympathized with him, she could rejoice even that he was accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. When he became the acknowledged spiritual father of hundreds, she regarded them all as dear children begotten in the gospel. When he and others refused submission to the illegal demands of the Commission, she said, "never sacrifice principle, even for peace." When he and others felt it their duty, regardless of prohibitions, to supply the destitute, she said, "obey God rather than men." When he and all other friends of this great awakening saw the necessity of constituting an independent Presbytery, in order to promote the gracious work and protect its fruits, she

resolved to become a nursing mother to the infant church, to be born in this revival of God's work and baptized in the tears of his devoted worshipers. Well and faithfully has she fulfilled her determination. She has been permitted to live long enough to see that infant, growing in favor with God and man, arriving at a strength and maturity which have already accomplished great things, and promise still greater, with the blessing of God upon her, and his glory in her midst. The heart that dictates these lines is fully assured from the character and sentiments of this venerable lady, that, if she still lingers upon earth, though in full view of heaven, she prays without ceasing, for God's blessing ever to rest upon the church with which she has so long sympathized, sacrificed, and suffered.

Why was Mr. Ewing required to deny himself the enjoyment of such a home? Why could not the smiles of a beloved wife, the endearments of sweetly prattling babes and all the nameless attractions that filled the family circle, win him from his purpose, and detain him a worshiper at the domestic altar? He was not insensible of his great and peculiar blessings; none could better know how to appreciate them; and he was often overpowered with a sense of gratitude to the bountiful Giver. But for Christ and the gospel's sake, he must forego them all. And wherefore?

Beyond the circle of his home joys there was a world lying in wickedness. He who gave himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man, had said, "go preach my gospel" — he dared not disobey — and his

promise, "lo I will be with you alway," afforded him sweet encouragment. He had experienced its fulfillment in the comforts of his own soul, and blessings on his labors. He always enjoyed most of his Saviour's presence when most engaged in his delightful service. There was a "wo" upon him if he "preached not the gospel."

The world may wonder at the constraints of a called minister of Christ, and inquire why it is that he should forsake house, land, wife and children, when he might enjoy all in the quietude and comfort of a pleasant home? Be it known that it is "for the kingdom of God's sake." For this the missionary leaves father, mother, brothers, and sisters, to bear the lamp of life to the heathen in their darkness and moral death, to tell them of a Saviour who died to redeem them.

The wisdom of this world, perhaps, might have released Mr. Ewing in his present circumstances, from obligations of the kind, and justified him in remaining with his family, by considerations like the following: Had he not for many years denied himself the comforts of home, and devoted himself to the service of the church? Had he not been the instrument of hopefully converting hundreds, and building up many churches? Had he not from the first been opposed, persecuted and slandered by five of the conspicuous ministers of his own Presbytery, who had brought down the Commission of Kentucky Synod to silence him and nearly all his co-laborers in the revival? Had not he and they been encouraged to disregard the prohibition, and go on

preaching the gospel for four years, and this too by Messrs. McGready and Hodge, their fathers in the ministry, who had lately deserted him and them, and returned to the body of their opponents? Was he not then in a position which would neither allow him to return to the Presbyterian church nor join any other, without an abandonment of long cherished principles, which he believed fully sustained by the word of God? And, notwithstanding the acknowledged gifts and extensive usefulness of his fellow laborers in the revival, had not their ordination been withheld for years by the Council, who had thought proper to avoid Presbyterian acts? And in fact, was he not then left without a sufficient number of ordained ministers to form a separate Presbytery? Why then should he continue his self-denying and arduous labors, with persecutions for his only reward?

This worldly wisdom may be effectually put to silence by more fully considering our Lord's declaration which, though it promises in this world "persecutions," adds also, "in the world to come, eternal life." Shall Mr. Ewing and his brethren reject the first, and claim the last part of this promise? Verily, no; the first was in the progress of its fulfillment, and they could anticipate the last in its fullest enjoyment.

Infidelity might have offered reasons for Mr. Ewing's abandonment of the revival, and even the work of the ministry, by suggestions of a selfish policy. In the bosom of his family he could enjoy more real happiness than elsewhere. Respected and beloved as he was by

his neighbors and friends, he could occupy among them as high a social position as a man should covet. By attending to his farm, and investing its proceeds in the vacant lands of the country, as many persons did, he could realize as splendid a fortune for his children as they ought to desire. But if he looked beyond pleasures and wealth, and aspired to honor and distinction, his ambition even might be gratified. He was still in the prime of life. Should he turn his attention to the law, his talents might soon place him at the head of the bar. Should he enter the political arena, his character for integrity, his popularity among all classes, his power of argument in debate, his eloquence so much admired, together with the well known influence of his numerous family connections, would insure his success. And who can say that he might not arise to equal conspicuity with the ablest statesmen? But by pursuing his ministerial labors he must endure privation without recompense, toil without reward, suffering without abatement, anxiety without alleviation, and the loss of all things without a solitary gain. The most that he could promise himself was, that he might become the leader of an obscure sect, which would live while enthusiasm should last, but die and be forgotten when reason should again assert dominion over the minds of men. By continuing in the ministry, and adhering to the revival he would sacrifice all things desirable, for a system which philosophy rejects, and for a sect which wise men will ere long abandon. Were the religion of Christ the reality it pretends to

be, and the Bible a divine revelation, all who preach the gospel are doing just what they ought; all who embrace religion should make others the partakers of its blessings, and for this no labors, sacrifices, and sufferings of men in this life can compare with the value of one immortal soul.

These suggestions of infidelity are sufficiently rebuked by showing that the religion of Christ is the sacred reality which it professes to be, and the Bible is a revelation from God. Ample proof might be adduced, were this the place for offering it. The reward of the servants of Christ is not in this world. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord." The Captain of our salvation is made perfect through sufferings; and we are made partakers with Christ's sufferings. We must be willing to follow him, as well through evil, as good report. His declaration is, he that loveth father, mother, son or daughter — he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me — is not worthy of me. Mr. Ewing and his brethren acted wisely and nobly in not deserting the cause of Christ and his gracious work, for worldly honors and emoluments.

The good man, while he fully trusts that God's grace will be sufficient for him, and his providence guide and protect him, need not be blind to existing evils, nor close his eyes on coming events which cast their shadows before. The state of the revival, however cheering in its practical operations and results, had arrived at a fearful crisis with regard to its ecclesiastical direction

and management. No one knew this better than Mr. Ewing; and he knew too that the time was not far distant, when many others would discover what he saw; and all would ultimately know it to their grief and lamentation, unless a remedy were speedily provided. This crisis was no less than the apparent impossibility, in the present state of affairs, of supplying the congregations with the sealing ordinances. This had been to some extent a serious difficulty, ever since the revival commenced; but now, owing to the diminished number of ordained ministers, who still took part in the revival, it had become ten fold greater than it was at first. Then the congregations were comparatively few; and there were five ordained ministers who were devoted to the good work. Now the revival had spread over a great extent of territory; the congregations had greatly multiplied; and not more than two — himself and Rev. Samuel King — could with any great certainty be relied on for this service. McGready and Hodge had become reconciled to the “Old Presbyterians,” as they were now called. Rankin had apostatized to the Shakers. McAdow was in feeble health. McGee had not yet felt free to unite in constituting a separate Presbytery, not because he doubted the lawfulness of the measure, but because, on the rejection of *fatality*, he had not yet been able to frame a system satisfactory to his own mind.

How was this difficulty to be surmounted? How were the congregations to be provided with the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper? He could not tell. He must inquire of the Lord, and take counsel

of him. Great was his anxiety, amounting at times to anguish of spirit and agony of supplication, while in this state of suspense. He saw plainly that the difficulty must be overcome in some way, or serious consequences would result: tens of thousands to all human appearance would be left destitute of the sealing ordinances. How long they would submit to the privation, he could not tell. He was aware that most of the earlier converts could not connect themselves with any other denomination. Their sentiments and their partialities were all with the revival ministers and exhorters, whom they regarded as the instruments under God of their awakening. He knew too that these had been much afflicted and wounded by the manner in which these good men had been treated by the Commission of Synod.

But he knew that there were many later converts — and the number of these was increasing every day — of whose sentiments and feelings he was not so well assured, having never seen them. Young converts generally, in the enjoyment of their first love to their Saviour, are desirous of testifying to his dying love and risen care, and partaking of the symbols of his broken body and shed blood. And if they are heads of families, they will prize the privilege of dedicating their children to the Lord in baptism. Under existing circumstances, he deemed it possible to afford the sealing ordinances to the congregations, only to a limited extent. Were he to invite from Upper Kentucky the ministers of the Synod, their compliance might be doubtful; and even if they were to come,

after what had happened, they might not be acceptable to the people. The friends of the revival had always lived in great harmony with all Christians, except a few of the opposing party and the Kentucky Synod. Were they to ask aid from the ministers of other denominations, it might interrupt this harmony, engender a proselyting spirit of which there had been a few manifestations, involve the societies in controversy, and seriously injure the revival.

Mr. Ewing could see no possible way of affording the sealing ordinances to the great number of congregations, except through the instrumentality of his fellow laborers. But few of these had been ordained. He was too sound a Presbyterian to think of their administering the ordinances, until they had been actually ordained to the work of evangelists, "by prayer and the laying on of the hands" of the Presbytery. He was fully satisfied that several of the licentiates were well qualified, and that they would have been ordained years before, if they had been under the care of a Presbytery instead of the Council. And there were several promising young men, laboring on their respective circuits, who had never been under the care of any Presbytery; but having made proof of their usefulness in the revival and aptness to teach, the Council had encouraged them to exercise their gifts. This they had done, greatly to the advancement of the revival and, it is universally believed, of the Redeemer's kingdom. These were Alexander Chapman, William Harris, Robert Donnell, William Barnett, Wm. Bumpass, Robert McCorkle, and David McLin. The first

named had been a candidate under Cumberland Presbytery. He believed that most of these would soon be prepared for the whole work of the ministry.

But how were those, who were qualified, to obtain ordination? A Presbytery must be constituted: this was manifest. The prospect of constituting a Presbytery by the existing ordained ministers was rather gloomy. The exceedingly great and precious promises were called to mind, especially those in behalf of the church. The result was a firm conviction, that the Lord who always has provided for his church would do so still. He could bring light out of this darkness; and in the midst of this perplexity, he could make the path of duty plain before his people. It was consoling to trust in him; it was pleasant to labor for him and for souls; it was encouraging to pray unceasingly for the divine direction.

CHAPTER XIV.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Critical state of the revival — Hopes and fears of its friends — The Committee — Ewing a father — Severe trials — Letter to Porter — Ordainers — Necessity — Proposal to McAdow — Doubtful question — Decided — Constitution — Important results — Joseph's brethren and Kentucky Synod — The purpose of God — Apt scholars — The right spirit — McLean ordained — His character and death — Ewing's feelings — Joy at the Exodus — Donnell's remarks — The venerated names — Explanation — Further annoyances — Pastoral letter — Ewing's reply — Lowry's statement.

Mr. EWING did not remain long at home. The state of the revival was rather critical, and might grow more so every day. The posture of ecclesiastical affairs soon became generally and extensively known, and the various classes of community were affected according to their prepossessions or prejudices for or against the work. Infidels, who had all along resisted the Holy Ghost, and had not yet submitted to the truth, thought the triumph of their principles at hand. Errorists now sought to take advantage of existing difficulties, hoping "to divide the spoil," and gain accessions to their respective ranks. Certain religious opposers predicted a speedy return to false-named orthodoxy and order. The irreligious hoped the reign of what they termed "enthusiasm" was about to end, and the good old times

to return, when men's consciences would no longer be disturbed.

But the friends of the revival, whether dispersed among other classes, or united with the congregations, were trembling with anxiety and alarm. They inquired when will this disastrous and unpromising state of affairs cease? Is there to be no organization, uniting the various congregations by one common bond? Will this glorious revival come to an end? They hoped not; they believed not, until certain of their children, friends and neighbors, for whom they had long labored and prayed, "nothing doubting," had been converted. They trusted the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers into the whitening fields, to gather in the fruits, securing them from the delusions of false prophets and the devices of Satan. They still hoped that they would not be left destitute of the precious word and ordinances. So long as they were faithful to themselves, their God and his glorious cause, they had nothing to fear from infidels, errorists, and worldly men. From their opposers they feared nothing; and even from the Kentucky Synod, they hoped nothing, they desired nothing, further than to be permitted to worship and serve their God unmolested. They knew, he whose right it is to reign, could subdue all things under him. They knew the Council had been dissolved, and a Committee formed, composed of men who, if not actually the first fathers of the gracious work, were its first fruits, its earliest advocates, its ablest promoters, and most successful propagators throughout the west. To

this Committee they could still look for succor. These were the men who had instrumentally awakened them from a death-like stupidity, mourned, wept, and prayed with them, while sorrowing for sin; and were the first to instruct, encourage, and rejoice with them, when they found peace in believing. These faithful shepherds would not leave them in this season of trial, a prey to ravenous wolves. The great Shepherd, who had taught them and set them over the flock, would never suffer them to flee as hirelings before the anathemas of false brethren, or the frowns of ungodly men. Their difficulties, however distressing, were not beyond the control of that power who maketh all things work together for the good of them that love him. Therefore they could trust God for the end, and look to the Committee for the means of its accomplishment.

Mr. Ewing traveled incessantly, preaching in many congregations and destitute neighborhoods where the good work was progressing. Many sought his instructions with regard to spiritual things; and all looked to him for counsel in the existing ecclesiastical difficulties. He scarcely allowed himself rest, by day or night. Others might relax their labors, cares, and anxieties, but he could not. Interests were at stake, dearer than life, involving nothing less than the glory of God, the success of his cause, and the salvation of souls. Wherever he went, the people welcomed him with joy and gratitude. Long had they been accustomed to regard him as their friend, their benefactor, their venerated minister and beloved brother in Christ. Now, by general consent,

they were disposed to adopt him as their counselor and leader in whatever measures might be necessary to promote the revival, supply the congregations and destitute places with the means of grace, and unite the whole in a common bond of union. By a concurrence of circumstances — or rather by the workings of Providence — he had now come to be looked upon as the father and founder of a revival church.

For some time he had admitted the necessity of a separate organization, that the friends of the revival might be delivered from the oppressive yoke of ecclesiastical bondage under which they had long groaned. He had hoped that Mr. McAdow or Mr. McGee would take the lead in this great enterprise ; but now he could expect from these excellent men, nothing further than approval, co-operation and union. The health of one was precarious ; and the spirits of both seemed somewhat broken by long years of opposition, persecution, and ecclesiastical tyranny. He plainly saw that the interests of the revival, its friends and subjects must be hazarded, or he himself must take the initiatory steps for constituting a separate Presbytery : that all must be given up to a state of destitution and dangers too painful to contemplate, or he must lead the way to another church. He was not a man to delay, where duty called ; nor to hesitate, when conscience urged. Assured of the favor of heaven, he could disregard the reproaches of infidels, the animadversions of errorists, the scoffs of the wicked, the pity of the world, the disavowments of Kentucky Synod, and if need be, the

repudiation of ill-informed Presbyterianism. In obeying God and his conscience, he feared them who might assail reputation, as little as he did them who can kill the body.

This was the season of Mr. Ewing's greatest trials as well as his most arduous labors. It would be interesting to pious hearts to know how he deliberated upon so important an undertaking, and how he prayed for the divine enlightenment, during this period. He who, when standing at the bar of a tyrannical Commission, said, "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God," had lost neither his fervor in prayer nor faith in divine promises. Doubtless he counseled much with the Father of light. But he counseled and corresponded very extensively with intelligent brethren. One letter, in relation to the contemplated organization, has come into the hands of the biographer, and is here given.

To Rev. James B. Porter, care of Thos. Hudson.

DEAR BROTHER : — My head aches ; but I am not willing longer to defer dropping you a line. I would be glad to see you ; but if this cannot be, I trust you will write to me. I am anxious to hear how the brethren generally stand affected, on your side of the country, [Tennessee,] with respect to our situation in church affairs. I expect you feel a similar anxiety for information from me. I will inform you that I have just visited Livingstone county ; and the brethren there seem bound to our Committee, by a stronger cord, if possible, than ever before. It is so with Casey's creek, Blooming grove, Spring creek, Lebanon, McAdow, &c. And what is strange to tell, Gasper river congregation have unanimously dissented from their preachers' act ; and all declare for the "Committee." One of Mr. Nelson's congregations will discontinue him, and a portion of the other, if he joins the Synod. Therefore, on the whole I do not

know more than nine or ten families, in all this side of the country, [Kentucky,] who will be induced to leave their brethren, "the Committee." For my own part, the more I contemplate the thing, the more clear I see my way, and the more determined I am "not again to be entangled with a yoke of bondage." Therefore, I feel determined, for one, to go into a constituted state, if I can get no more than one ordained preacher to join me. You may perhaps be startled at this. So was I, when I first looked at the subject. But on a closer and more impartial examination of my aversion to such a measure, I was induced to believe that pride and tradition were the most formidable arguments against it. I therefore was induced to give up the point, for the following reasons: 1st. Because the necessities of the church demand it. 2d. Because there is nothing in God's word forbidding it. 3d. Because no reformed church in Christendom, except the Presbyterian, requires, absolutely and under all circumstances, the number of three ordained preachers to ordain one. 4th. Because even that church can depart from their rule, one of the members of Synod being in that predicament: J—— B——. Therefore, for so doing, we could not feel, nor justly be, reproached from any quarter. I think, notwithstanding, the Presbyterian rule on this subject a good one; and I would not consent to depart from it only in a case of extreme necessity. Whether we will be necessitated to do so, I cannot yet tell, for I have not heard from Mr. McGee nor Mr. McAdow.

Brother Porter, if you will not think it discourteous, I will ask you a question on which I wish you seriously to think: whether it would most wound your pride or your conscience, to receive ordination from only two ministers?

I cannot think in my soul of receding and swallowing what I do not believe, nor preach, nor ever expect to preach. Honesty becomes gospel ministers. Yet when I look forward, I see numerous difficulties. But when I look again, I see THE LORD STRONGER than them all: "hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

A number of praying people in this country have had painful and laborious exercises of mind, with regard to the present state of our affairs; some of whom have obtained clear views and become happy on the subject, believing, if we go right forward, that God will bless, own, and enlarge, "for his name's sake." Some of our people retain

the good old revival spirit. We frequently have happy social meetings. The good Lord blesses my own poor soul now and then.

Do not fail to write to me. Remember me tenderly to Mrs. Porter, to Mr. Hudson, lady and family. Salute brother Thomas Calhoun for me. I would write to him, if I knew where to direct or how to convey a letter to his neighborhood. But tell him I love him as dearly as if I were to write ten sheets to him.

Farewell. Pray for me.

FINIS EWING.

December 6th, 1809.

P. S. I have written hastily, but remembered I was writing to a brother; therefore paid very little attention to manner or form: the substance is mostly what I now care for.

F. E.

This letter appears to have been directed as above, under the belief that Mr. Porter was generally absent from home, laboring among the congregations, as had for years been his custom; and that Mr. Hudson, his father-in-law would best know how to send it to him. It will be recollected that Rev. James B. Porter was one of those licentiates whose examination on languages &c. had been sustained by his Presbytery; but that he had been prohibited from preaching equally with all the others, by the Commission of Synod, because he as well as they refused to submit to the unconstitutional demand made by that body for re-examination. His case, even if there were no other, would unequivocally prove, that the true and only cause of the separation of the evangelical party from the other Church was the refusal of the former to surrender the rights of Presbytery to the lawless demand of a Commission of the latter.

Mr. Ewing appears to have been aware of the ordination of the good Farel by Ecolampadius, in the time of the reformation; of Dr. Coke by Mr. Wesley, and of

other ordinations by less than three ministers ; still he esteems the Presbyterian rule too important to be lightly departed from. It is matter of thankfulness that Providence so overruled, that he was not laid under so painful a necessity.

Having used all the means in their power to effect a reconciliation with the Kentucky Synod, the ministers and friends of the revival generally became fully convinced that nothing less would avail to accomplish this, than a surrender of the rights of Presbytery, and an unexceptionable adoption of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian church. As honest men, the ministers could not comply with these demands ; and as conscientious men, the laymen could not bear to see their spiritual guides subjected to so great sin and degradation. Hence the absolute necessity of constituting a Presbytery, independent of the Presbyterian church, was clearly seen and acknowledged. The congregations and people every where looked to Mr. Ewing to take measures to effectuate this object. They knew Mr. King, who enjoyed their fullest confidence, as a pure minded man, a zealous Christian and useful minister, was entirely devoted to the cause, and could be safely relied on to assist. And they could not doubt but Mr. McAdow and Mr. McGee who had labored so faithfully in the revival and suffered so much from its opposers, would, one or both, now unite in giving permanency to the gracious work, consistency to its fruits and stability to a new organization which would be evangelical, not merely in *profession*, but also in faith and practice.

Accordingly the subject was presented, by Messrs. Ewing and King, in company with Mr. Ephraim McLean, to Mr. McAdow, at his own house in Dixon county, Tenn. Doubtless the state of affairs was fully known to him; and the proposition to constitute a Presbytery neither new or unexpected. But he was a man of faith and prayer, and must take time for reflection and inquiry of that Being, infinite in wisdom, whom he habitually consulted, before he could come to a decision. During that whole night, he wrestled in prayer; and often during the next day, he retired to his place of secret devotion, and laid the case before that God who giveth wisdom to the humble. At length he presented himself before his brethren, saying "that God had heard and answered the doubtful question;" and he was ready to join them in constituting a Presbytery.

This important act which had been long contemplated, occasioning so many hopes and fears, bright prospects and gloomy discouragements, was at length consummated, on the 4th of February, 1810. A Presbytery was then and there constituted, which was the mother of the more than eighty Presbyteries of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. This measure had long elicited much faith and prayer from the whole revival party; but it also had been anticipated with no little scorn and derision by their opponents. It has been growing in interest from that day to this, and will continue to grow while time shall last. It is probable that the actors in this scene, expecting only to find a refuge from the storm of persecution and the means of serving God and

their generation without molestation, had but a faint view of the results of their action ; but judging of the future by the past, it is evident that the consequences upon the destinies of mankind will not be inconsiderable. There were once assembled, in an upper room at Jerusalem, the followers of him who shall have the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Great effects result from little causes. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth." The sons of Jacob, had they foreseen their own degradation and their brother's elevation to wealth and honor, would hardly have sold Joseph into Egypt. And the Kentucky Synod, had they then foreseen the results which they now see, as well as those which, however reluctantly, they are compelled to anticipate, never would, even for the sake of their own justification, have pushed the feeble remnant of revival ministers to the necessity of constituting this first Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian church. Let every member of this church cherish and inculcate the meek spirit of Joseph towards the brethren of that communion, feeling as well as saying, "be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves." "For God sent (our fathers) before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth." Your own historians have told you of the dearth and deadness of your church, before the glorious revival of 1800. They have depicted, in sombre colors of humiliation, the lamentable state of religion and absence of revivals among you, until about the year 1826. You yourselves have been witnesses of the wonderful progress and

extensive revivals, during that entire period and ever since, of those whom your Commission would have sold into Egypt, for less than twenty pieces of silver. In the meantime you have improved, as apt scholars. You can, and generally do preach the very doctrines for which our fathers suffered and we still contend. You have introduced among your people camp and protracted meetings, conference and inquiry meetings, the anxious seat, the instruction of seekers in your public assemblies and, to some extent, the itinerant system. And it is matter of great joy indeed that there will be preserved a posterity of so amiable and excellent a people as you confessedly are, upon the earth: that is the Mississippi Valley. Then let brotherly love continue. Let it be reciprocal. Let the only strife between us be, who shall serve our common Lord most faithfully and our common humanity most disinterestedly.

The first acts of the new Cumberland Presbytery were the examination and ordination of the licentiate, Mr. Ephraim McLean, who appears to have attended, by previous arrangement, for the purpose. He was one of the first fruits of the revival, and deserves more than a passing notice in the church's history. When the demand for preaching so far exceeded the ability of the ordained preachers to supply it, that it was deemed expedient to select some of the most intelligent and pious young men and send them forth as traveling exhorters, in 1801, Mr. McLean was one of the four who, by the advice of the revival ministers, offered themselves to Transylvania Presbytery for the service

of the church. His name frequently appears in the subsequent acts of Presbytery. And notwithstanding he labored assiduously, zealously, and usefully, he appears to have been treated with a want of consideration and disregard to propriety which would have discouraged any ordinary man. But he was not discouraged nor weary in well doing, knowing whom he served, for what he labored, and the prize he should receive. And notwithstanding Dr. Davidson speaks rather contemptuously of his reception as a candidate for the ministry, it is certain that several respectable congregations with whom he labored, had, previous to this, presented petitions, "importunately praying even for his licensure." He and others were the marks at whom the opposers of the revival were wont to cast their missiles; but he and they were loved by the pious and intelligent for their works' sake. He labored not in vain; and the writer has known several excellent Christians who acknowledged his instrumentality in their conversion. And though he lived not many years after his ordination, his upright, unobtrusive, and consistent course saved him from the aspersions which were cast upon many others: an evidence that the opposition he encountered was directed not so much against the man, as the cause he had espoused. After serving the church efficiently and faithfully for a few years, he died lamented by all who knew him. He left a large and respectable family. His eldest son, the Hon. John McLean held several offices of trust, and was twice elected a member of the United States Senate from Illinois.

His youngest son, the Hon. Finis Ewing McLean, of Kentucky, has represented his county several times in the Legislature of that State, and lately his district in the lower house of Congress.

Of the constitution of the Presbytery and its action, Mr. Ewing writes to Mr. Smith as follows: "During the preceding transactions, I felt an indescribable awe, solemnity, and even timidity. My judgment was clear, that it was a duty to constitute a Presbytery; but I feared that I had no immediate, special, and overpowering evidence direct from God, that we were about to do right. But being appointed to preside in the ordination, it became my duty to pray. I distinctly recollect that, with one hand on the head of the preacher, and the other lifted to heaven, the first sentence I uttered, the immediate presence and power of God were most sensibly felt by me, and I believed by all engaged in the transaction: and such were my feelings, that every doubt concerning the propriety of what we had done was entirely banished."

It would be difficult to describe the joy and gratitude which the constitution of Cumberland Presbytery excited, throughout the States and Territories which had experienced the revival influences. At last the friends and promoters of the blessed work were delivered from the house of bondage. Now no ecclesiastical body could arrogate to themselves the power of persecution by divine right. There would be no more citations, suspensions, prohibitions, obtrusions on the rights of Presbytery, nor unconstitutional demands for re-examinations.

These humble followers of the Lord Jesus had made their final exodus, into a large place, their own rightful inheritance ; and if their inveterate opposers should follow them with denunciations and misrepresentations, the Lord who caused the waters to return upon Pharaoh and his host, would preserve them unharmed, except so far as might be necessary to suppress the promptings of pride, and teach them lessons of dependence.

To give an idea of the sentiments and feelings of those who were laboring in the revival, on hearing of the constitution of the new Presbytery, it may suffice to annex the remarks of Rev. Robert Donnell, who was one of the young men who had been encouraged by the Council to exercise his gifts in public exhortation.

“I was traveling in Alabama Territory,” says he, “when I heard of the constitution of the first Cumberland Presbytery by Messrs. McAdow, Ewing, and King. If I ever was free from sectarian feelings, it was at that period. I often thought, for what am I laboring? I am connected with no constituted Church, and know not that I ever shall be. For what then do I labor, if I cannot build up a church? The reply was, only for the glory of God, and the salvation of precious souls. But what will become of the few so strongly united in the bonds of love? This could only be solved by the Head of the Church; of Him I often sought for an answer; and I am persuaded he did answer: as some time before the Presbytery was constituted, I became quite calm on the subject, under the firm persuasion

that the Lord would open a way for us. I was in this frame when the intelligence reached me, which caused me to feel truly thankful to God who had thus opened a door for a feeble handful of his followers to become more extensively useful."

The next meeting of Cumberland Presbytery was at the Ridge meeting house, in March 1810, were the congregations were first fully represented. Its ordained ministers were Samuel McAdow, Finis Ewing, Samuel King, and Ephraim McLean. Its licentiates were James B. Porter, Hugh Kirkpatrick, Robert Bell, David Foster, and James Farr. Its candidates were Thomas Calhoun,* Alexander Chapman, William Harris, Robert Donnell, William Barnett, William Bumpass, Robert McCorkle, and David McHin. These venerated names, together with that of Rev. William McGee, who united with the Presbytery in the fall of the same year, will go down to posterity as the fathers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and the promoters of the revival which, after a lapse of more than half a century, is still in progress.

It may be noticed that many names are given in the prohibitive act of the Commission, in a previous chapter which are here omitted. The explanation of this is, that the old Cumberland Presbytery never designed to admit to the ministry those who after some trial, gave no satisfactory evidence of their aptness to teach;

* The name of Thomas Calhoun is uniformly found in Smith and Davidson's Histories among the licentiates. The venerable gentleman informs the writer that this is a mistake: he was only a candidate.

consequently not half of those licensed to catechise and exhort, were even received as candidates for the ministry. Smith, who in his history has been generally found accurate in his statements of fact as well as in his judgments of men and measures, affirms that "The course pursued by the opposite party [the Commission of Synod] was unjust, and cruel, and their denunciations of the young men as disorderly, heretical, and disorganizing, savored not of the Spirit of Christ, neither did they act candidly, in not distinguishing between those, who were merely licensed as exhorters and chatechists, from those who were received as candidates ; as they could not but know what were the designs of Presbytery." It is hoped for the honor of our holy religion as well as of our common Presbyterianism, that at least the motives of "the opposite party" were somewhat less censurable than the above language would necessarily imply.

Did the revival party flatter themselves, after constituting the new Cumberland Presbytery, that they would escape any further annoyance or unkindness from their opponents ? Indeed they were mistaken. Mr. McAdow, by the new organization, having declined the jurisdiction of their church, they, by an act of the Muhlenburg Presbytery, pretended to depose him from the gospel ministry. And after Mr. McGee had joined the Cumberland Presbytery, he too was followed by a like censure. These childish acts were doubtless intended for public effect, but their entire failure must have produced no small mortification to their perpetrators : for all could see that, on the same principle and with

the same degree of justice to the rights of conscience, the Pope could depose every Protestant minister in Christendom.

But this was not all. After the abortive attempt for a re-union, by order of the West Tennessee Presbytery, "a pastoral letter was addressed to all the churches under its care, warning them of the *heresies* of those who had assumed the name of Cumberland Presbytery, asserting that its members had no authority to administer ordinances, &c. This letter was ably answered by Rev. Finis Ewing."* It was indeed ably answered, so ably that it must have settled the question at issue to the satisfaction of all intelligent and unprejudiced minds. There was no ground left for a rejoinder: there never was any. With a single comment, Dr. Davidson dismisses this pastoral letter: "to which Finis Ewing published a reply, which was regarded by his own party as an able composition."† It might be interesting to many to know how the historian regards the "composition."

Many years ago, the writer of this biography was informed by a Presbyterian minister, of a conversation between Dr. Anderson, of East Tennessee, and Dr. Blackburn. Dr. Anderson remarked substantially as follows: "By this controversy you have nothing to gain and much to lose. I advise you to let the Cumberland Presbyterians alone. Have no more to do with this Finis Ewing. He is so skilled in Indian warfare that you can neither head nor hamper him; and

* Smith, p. 644.

† Dav. His. p. 254.

certainly in his reply to your pastoral letter, he has given you a Braddock's defeat."

If the reader wishes correctly to comprehend the origin, progress, and termination of the difference between the Synod of Kentucky, and the former Presbytery of Cumberland, reference may be had to the CIRCULAR LETTER, which gives a clear and condensed view of the subject, and may be found in the Appendix to Smith's History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

This may be as proper a place as any other to give the following statement, kindly furnished by Rev. David Lowry, pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, of Lebanon, Tennessee. "Shortly before the late war with England, Mr. Ewing, with Rev. Ephriam McLean, held a meeting of some days, near Harford, Ohio county, Kentucky, which sowed the seeds of Cumberland Presbyterianism in that county. Many professed religion at this meeting; but on account of the great scarcity of preachers and the many calls on this infant denomination for ministerial aid, no church was organized. The consequence was, other denominations reaped the fruits of this meeting. The converts however, still retained endearing recollections of the preachers, through whose instrumentality they had been brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Some ten or more years after the meeting referred to, Rev. Messrs. Chapman and Harris were invited to hold a camp-meeting in the same neighborhood; and considerable preparations were made for the purpose. A prominent citizen, Col. James

Beard, who had been converted at Mr. Ewing's meeting, resolved, if possible, to have him at the meeting now in prospect. He wrote earnestly soliciting and urging his attendance, saying, "you must come, and when you appear in the pulpit, many of your congregation will say, there is my spiritual father." Mr. Ewing complied with this request; the meeting was very successful; and at its close, the first Cumberland Presbyterian church ever organized north of Green river, was constituted.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHAPLAIN AND SOLDIER.

The Christian a patriot — A two-fold character — Mr. McSpedden's account — Groundless objections — Valid objections — His true reasons — Adventurous spirit — Servant unto all — Wilson's reminiscences — A sermon — Letters to Harris — Loss by fire.

Mr. EWING was a patriotic citizen as well as a Christian minister. Next to the holy Bible, he appears to have valued the American constitution; and next to the sublime hopes inspired by the former, to have rejoiced in the dear bought rights and privileges guaranteed by the latter. As a general principle, it will be found that he who loves his God supremely, will also love his country disinterestedly; and while he maintains the doctrines of a pure Christianity, he will uphold the principles of human right. Standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free, he knows how to prize the freedom of opinion and conscience bought with the blood of his fathers. Being a fellow-citizen with the saints, he is a co-worker with patriots; and being of the household of faith, he is associated with those who labor for the glory and happiness of his country. It is impossible to conceive of a humble and devoted Christian, who is not at the same time a pure and disinterested patriot. Love to God and love to

mankind are inseparable ; and every heart impressed with the one, also cherishes the other.

Hitherto Mr. Ewing has been presented as the orphan boy, the lover of juvenile sports, the combatant with hostile Indians, the member of a debating club, the leader in church music, the husband of Davidson's daughter, the sincere penitent, the searcher after truth, the religious layman, the instructor of his neighbors, the humble exhorter, the promoter of the revival, the laborious missionary, the eloquent preacher, the vanquisher of infidels and errorists, the member of Presbytery, the supporter of the rights of conscience, the silenced minister still preaching, the favorite of the people, the intrepid leader, the chosen father of the revival church, and its triumphant vindicator against the attacks of its enemies. But he is now to appear in the two-fold character of Chaplain and soldier in the American army. It has not been unusual for the wisest and best of gospel ministers to join the army as Chaplains ; but for one in that office to insist, as did Mr. Ewing, on being permitted to do duty as a soldier, and when necessary to join in battle with the enemy, is a novel occurrence, and exposes his conduct to criticism. On this subject different opinions have been entertained ; while some have condemned, others have justified. Each has a right to his own opinion. The writer is not aware that any of Mr. Ewing's own brethren have ever impugned his motives ; but it must be admitted that some have disapproved his course. It is said, however, that those who learned from him the motives which

prompted his conduct, became entirely satisfied with its correctness. Certainly much may be said on both sides of the question. In order to a just decision, the case must be considered in connection with all the accompanying circumstances.

Without regard to public rumor or any thing contained in the newspapers of the day on this subject, the following definite statement has been furnished by an intimate friend of Mr. Ewing, Rev. Samuel McSpedden, of Warren county, Tennessee, and may be relied on as strictly true.

“Prior to the war of 1812, Maj. General Hopkins, then engaged in raising troops for an expedition against the Indians and their British abettors north of the Ohio, applied to Mr. Ewing to join the army as Chaplain. Ewing after much deliberation consented, on condition that he might be permitted to take with him his rifle and, in case of necessity, use it as others did. This condition was accepted. He went out with the army, served in the double capacity of Chaplain and soldier, and returned unharmed.

What were the objections to his course? It was said by certain politicians that the Ewings were a large and ambitious family, and were engrossing to themselves many of the highest offices; and while one of the brothers had been made a Colonel in this expedition, another had been appointed Chaplain. Others thought the army could do well enough without a Chaplain, and could see no advantage to be derived from the appointment, further than to please an influential family.

These of course were not religious persons. But some good men thought actual service in war not becoming a messenger of the gospel of peace.

There were certainly valid objections, whether they were ever made or not. Mr. Ewing had been the principal and most active agent in organizing the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. When attacked, he had taken up his pen and made a noble defence. Should another attack be made from the same quarter, his great abilities would be required for repelling it. But no attack was made from that source. And as regards the New Lights who were traveling the country, and disseminating their errors, every Cumberland Presbyterian preacher felt himself fully competent to encounter and vanquish them. And while it is acknowledged, to the credit of the Presbyterians, that their writers rendered valuable service from the press, it cannot be denied that their Cumberland brethren did more for the cause of truth from the pulpit. But a young and growing denomination, engaged in conducting a revival seldom equaled in the church's history, and having many difficulties to encounter, besides a scarcity of preachers, it must be confessed, could not well spare from their ranks a man of Mr. Ewing's brilliant talents and untiring industry. And when this is said, it is proper to attend to what may be said on the other side of the question.

The troops were raised principally in the region of country where Mr. Ewing had labored. Many of the soldiers knew him personally, had sat under his ministry, and while all respected him, a goodly number regarded

him as their spiritual father. The parents of these young soldiers, many of them members of the church, were very solicitous for the success of Gen. Hopkins' application, believing that Mr. Ewing would be a guard and guide to their sons. Hence they seconded the application with all their eloquence and many entreaties. It is beyond a doubt that Mr. Ewing looked upon these soldiers somewhat in the light of dear brethren and children; and in addition to the promptings of his patriotism, he was moved by these considerations. He knew too that he could preach the gospel to greater numbers, while on this expedition than he probably could at home. At any time when not on active duty, he could have his congregation. And he doubtless flattered himself that much good would result.

Much good did result. But it may be that he had not lost the spirit of his youthful days; and in contemplating an expedition against the Indians, he felt a return of those adventurous feelings which had in former times led him in pursuit of "*the cowardly savages*" in the Cumberland country. Having lived, for years in early life, in a settlement much annoyed by the savages, having early been one of those relied on for the defence of innocence and helplessness against their hostile attacks, it is probable his feelings were interested and his heart touched, in a manner not to be understood nor appreciated by those who have never had his experience.

But why did he insist on the condition that he should serve in the ranks? Doubtless because he knew this would at all times give him access to the common

soldiers, and enable him to exert a salutary influence over them. Knowing the corrupting influences which find their way into an army, he was anxious to watch over their health and habits, guard their morals and principles, and win them to virtue and religion. He was well aware that this course would not lessen his influence with the officers of the army, all of whom knew his character and standing at home, and justly appreciated his talents and piety. Like the Apostle, he appears to have made himself servant unto all, that he might gain the more.*

It has been said that he consented to accept the chaplaincy, after much deliberation. It is well known to his friends that he was accustomed to consult God by prayer, before he could decide or engage in any important enterprise. His "much deliberation" was doubtless accompanied with many fervent prayers; and it would be interesting to the pious to know something of his internal struggles and exercises of mind, before deciding so important a question. But nothing further has come to the knowledge of the writer. His habitual taciturnity with regard to himself has put this as well as many other subjects of interest beyond the reach of inquiry.

The writer has taken due pains to furnish the readers of his work, with authentic information respecting Mr. Ewing's general course of conduct during this northern expedition, the nature of his intercourse with the officers and soldiers as well as the influence he

* 1 Cor. ix, 19.

exerted on the army ; but his success has been inconsiderable. A few interesting reminiscences by Mr. Constant Wilson, of Russellville, Kentucky, are all that can be relied on. He says he was between fifteen and sixteen years of age, when he left Russellville with his company, on the 12th of September, 1812. The army rendezvoused and was organized at Vincennes, Indiana. He remembers often to have seen Mr. Ewing, riding in the ranks of his own regiment, dressed in the uniform of a common soldier, and knows that he preached to all the regiments, which were five in number. He remembers once being out on guard, when Mr. Ewing preached to his own regiment. He says the object of the expedition was to relieve Fort Harrison. The following is his account of one sermon.

“ The regiment of Col. Young Ewing being drawn up for the purpose of divine service, Rev. Finis Ewing, who used occasionally to preach to the troops, rode up, and there, on horseback, with his rifle before him, resting across his saddle-bow, preached a very excellent and feeling sermon, of about an hour's length. The soldiers of the regiment listened with respectful attention, and appeared interested and solemn. I myself was so much interested that, long afterwards, I could remember much of his sermon and repeat some of his entire sentences, verbatim. Even at this distance of time, I remember that the drift of his discourse was to show the analogy between the natural and spiritual warfare, the soldier of the country and the soldier of the cross. The one fought against the enemies of his country, the

other had to contend against a corrupt nature, a deceitful heart, and the enemies of his God. The one employed carnal weapons ; the other used only spiritual weapons ; “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. Hence watchfulness, fidelity, loyalty, bravery, energy, and perseverance, were necessary to both. He then portrayed in glowing colors the fruits of victory : in the one case, the liberty and independence of his country with the joy and gratitude of his fellow-citizens ; in the other, palms of victory, crowns of glory, sceptres of righteousness, and an inheritance at God’s right hand, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can heart understand.”

“After his return,” says Mr. McSpedden, “he remarked to his friends, that he had found himself able to fight the Indians in Tennessee, when he had no religion ; then how much less should he now be afraid to encounter Indians or other enemies of his country, when he enjoyed the Christian’s hope.”

No allusion is made in any of Mr. Ewing’s letters which have come to hand, to this northern expedition, except in one to Rev. William Harris ; in which, after suggesting certain arrangements respecting the theological library which was then being collected, he speaks of his return, of certain soldiers who had died of their wounds, and of the safe return of his son, William Lee,* after an honorable discharge. The same letter.

* This was Gen. Ewing, Attorney at Law, afterwards a Senator in Congress from Illinois.

concludes as follows: "Two nights before I got home, my large double barn, all my wheat, rye, oats, nearly all my flax, about two hundred bushels of corn, plows, gear, &c., were consumed by fire. This loss, happening at this time, I shall very seriously feel. It will be difficult to repair. 'But shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?' My prayer is to have the sanctified benefit of the dispensation. Do you pray for it also."

CHAPTER XVI.

USEFULNESS AS A CITIZEN.

Removal—Postmaster at Ewingsville—Pastor of Lebanon church—Academy built—Sermon on national affairs—Cause of its publication—Republished in 1850—Its character—Sentiments—His correspondence—Letter to Donnell—To Calhoun—To Harris—Confinement—Bible Society.

THE year of Mr. Ewing's removal from Logan to Christian county, is not exactly known. It must have been previous to 1813, for many of his letters of that and succeeding years are dated and postmarked Ewingsville, and franked by him, as postmaster. This is in the part of Todd county which was at the time embraced in the county of Christian. Here he took the pastoral charge of Lebanon congregation, in the vicinity of Ewingsville. Notwithstanding the newness of the country, and the scarcity of houses of worship of any kind, even in the towns, the people of this neighborhood erected a neat and commodious edifice of brick, for an academy as well as a house of worship for this congregation. Here for many years was sustained a flourishing classical school. It is understood that Mr. Ewing contributed liberally to the building and support of the seminary, which continued to prosper while under his fostering care, but sunk into decline on his removal to Missouri. Many years ago, the writer, while residing

in Elkton, about eight miles distant, preached frequently in this church, and remembers to have admired the public spirit which had erected such a building in a country neighborhood, in so early a period of its settlement. The pastor devoted one-half of his time to this church, the other half to camp and protracted meetings in this and the adjoining counties, with annual visits to the churches of his old circuit in Tennessee, and some occasional visits to places where his services were specially needed, or importunately solicited.

It was in 1814, after the fall of Bonaparte, that Mr. Ewing preached his celebrated "Sermon on National Affairs." Our country was still engaged in war with Great Britain, and certain British writers, in a vain and boastful spirit, threatened that their government, now being free to turn the entire force of their arms against us, would soon re-colonize the United States. This, so far from eliciting fear, stirred up indignation in the heart of every true American. "This discourse," says Mr. Ewing, "was not contemplated till after the downfall of Napoleon, and the threat to re-colonize us, which followed that event. These things made a deep impression on my mind, and gave rise to my preaching this sermon a few days afterwards, at Casey's Creek, on the fourth Saturday in July." This discourse excited a powerful interest at the time, and by the solicitations of his friends, both religious and political, he was prevailed on shortly after, to preach it in various places to large congregations. While it is probable that none of his literary productions have done him

more credit with the public generally, who agreed with him in sentiment, it is certain that none have been more criticized and misrepresented by the few then in the west who opposed the war and the existing administration.

In the preface, speaking of his reluctance to committing his sermon to the press, the author says: "But the requests of many who heard it, the hope that it might be in some degree useful in counteracting certain foul insinuations respecting it, and the desire to speak out plainly, for myself as well as my brethren, on the subject of our present SECOND struggle for independence, are some of the motives which have induced me to consent to its publication."

This sermon was re-published at Louisville, in the Theological Medium, in 1850, the editor remarking as follows: "Of late, frequent inquiries have been made for it, and a desire expressed for its publication in the Medium. We take pleasure in complying with this request, as it obliges many friends and patrons; and in these times of traitorous schemes and treasonable movements on the part of sectional extremists, the reading of this sermon can but tend to induce a stronger love of country in those who have not passed through the times that tried men's souls."

This sermon breathes a spirit of the purest patriotism, as well as the most ardent piety. It evinces a thorough acquaintance with the British and American Constitutions, and proves that its author had long and accurately studied the history, policy, spirit, genius, and resources of the two countries. If it should be thought by some

to manifest an undue severity upon British policy, such as the sanction of the worship of Juggernaut for the sake of revenue, the oppression of her own Catholic subjects, contrasted with her agency in re-establishing the Pope in his power and Ferdinand VII in Spain, &c., it must be remembered that this was spoken of a nation; then waging war against us and repeatedly threatening to re-colonize us. And if the sentiments concerning Gov. Strong and others at the north, who opposed the war, are thought to savor of a want of charity, it must be borne in mind that those sentiments were generally entertained and unhesitatingly expressed at the west by a very large majority of patriots and Christians at the time. Time has to some extent changed, or at least modified those views.

The general sentiments of the sermon will doubtless be approved by all American patriots; and its spirit will be admired by all Christian hearts. Its grand excellency is the spirit of piety which it uniformly breathes: the inculcation of dependence on God, obedience to his laws, submission to his will, and a humble reliance on his promises. Our goodly heritage* is shown to have been obtained "at the price of blood and treasure;" by means of "valor, skill, patriotism, and prayer;" and must be preserved "by the proper exercise of our privileges in the choice of rulers, the nourishing of the principles of true patriotism, the diffusion of useful knowledge, submission to lawful authority, virtue and morality, reformation and prayer." If the author of

* The text was Psalms xvi, 6.

the sermon experienced any slight vexation from the censures and insinuations of certain querulous minds, it was more than compensated by the complimentary letters from distinguished men which poured in upon him, after its circulation.

Mr. Ewing's correspondence was extensive. He was in the habit of writing more or less frequently to nearly all the preachers who belonged to, or were under the care of the first Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian church. And from the letters put into the hands of the biographer, frequent allusions are made to his correspondence with many of the elders and private members. He appears to have felt a tender concern for the great interests of religion, and to have exercised a fatherly care over the church generally, and its members individually. It is matter of wonder, how he could find time for so voluminous a correspondence, considering his laborious duties as a preacher. It is true, his letters appear to have been written hastily, and without any extraordinary care; but it is equally true, whether the subject relate to private, personal, family, neighborhood, or church affairs, or be confined to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom—that they always evince the same deep thought, sound judgment, warm feelings, disinterested friendship, and pure devotion to God's glory and man's spiritual good. Some of his letters to two of those young men who were first received as candidates, after the new constitution, with a few others, have been put into our hands: these are Rev. Robert Donnell, of Athens, Alabama, and Rev.

William Harris, deceased, late of Warren county, Ky. From these, and others, it is proposed to give such letters or extracts as may serve to develop the disposition and habits of the man as well as his devotion to the great cause he had espoused.

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, May 30, 1817.

MY DEAR BROTHER ROBERT: * * * * I am pleased to hear that you are indefatigable in the good work, that you are not counting your ease or even your life dear, so that you may win souls. May the Lord ever keep in your heart the true spirit of his missionary, whose labors he will delight to own and bless.

I am afraid the new country of which you speak will fill up too fast with Christians; that is, that too much of the salt of the earth will concentrate in one place, to the injury or danger of the vast bodies of the spiritually dead, but intelligent and accountable beings, who may suffer moral putrefaction, without the savor of those who seem to be making their way from amongst them. A number of persons in this congregation talk of removing to the late purchase in the south. Sinners who have precious souls, are still numerous here. What shall be done for them?

I have just returned from a camp meeting in brother John Barnett's neighborhood. I tried to preach four times on the occasion: first, on prayer; secondly, on the duty of the Church to pray for more laborers; thirdly, on the sufferings of the Son of God; fourthly, on the excuses mortals make for not coming to Christ. God seemed to be specially near, during a great part of the occasion. His people were comforted; sinners were awakened; and nineteen or twenty professed religion, among whom was an intelligent Atheist! He is a European by birth, and had not attended meeting but once for five years before this camp meeting. But that same cross which seemed to be both a stumbling block and foolishness to him, appears to have been too mighty for his proud heart. Glory to God in the highest! It is no wonder that Paul would only glory in the cross. It is no wonder that he would only know Christ and him crucified. Could a devil get a view of it, as man is permitted to see it, he would be

conquered by the sight. But why such glorying in the cross? Because there hung the incarnate mystery. There the law was magnified; there its awful claims were satisfied; there countless, eternal hells, (so to speak,) were concentrated; there expiation was made; there the throne was sprinkled; there an everlasting righteousness was completed; and there all our hopes and prospects for present and eternal felicity rest.

I have just written to one of my correspondents that a Christian ought to abound in every good word and work, as though he were to merit heaven by it, and depend no more on this for his acceptance with God, than if he had done nothing at all. Indeed, I am persuaded, the more a true Christian works the less will he depend on his own righteousness; and when he comes to die, he will feel that all his good works will not weigh a feather in the scale, in favor of his acceptance. O, no. It is Christ and his pure righteousness, together with a consciousness of having a relish for the enjoyment of God that can support the enlightened soul in death.

Brother Rice has removed to St. Louis. We are scarce of preachers; but I trust the Lord is about to call more. Our young licentiates promise to be useful. Write to me fully and freely. Pray for me and my family. Give my love to the brethren. Tell them to take on Zion's pangs, to travail in birth, to take no denial, till God works wonders. May the Lord Jesus Christ be ever present with you and them. Your brother, FINIS EWING.

To Rev. Thomas Calhoun.

EWINGVILLE, March 16, 1816.

DEAR BROTHER CALHOUN:— * * * * * The epidemic made its appearance among us last month, and wafted, I trust, to heaven two old soldiers of the cross and one woman. "Fierce diseases wait around to hurry mortals home." Fierce indeed this appears to be. But few however have died in this section with it; but I fear we are too insensible to the preserving care of that God who controls the pestilence. I have heard that the disease has made fearful strides in various parts of Tennessee. May God sanctify the dispensation to the good of saints and sinners.

Religion here is not so flourishing as is desirable. We had however a solemn time yesterday. While I was trying to preach from the text, "I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord," there was much

feeling among the people; the Lord liberated my poor stammering tongue, and led me away into the good country. And while I was there a learned infidel who was present looked as solemn as death, and seemed alarmed, as if standing at the bar of judgment. May the Spirit of God re-preach the truth to his conscience. An awful dispensation of providence took place on Casey's creek. On the Sabbath while a man and his wife were absent, their two only sons, little boys, in a frolic mounted a horse without a bridle, riding to and from a neighbor's house, both whipping and urging on the horse as fast as possible; and both at once were dashed into eternity. God disapproves Sabbath-breaking even in the children. May this prove a salutary warning to all disobedient children. May the lesson not be lost to parents.

Sometime since, some libertine, under the garb of Christianity, wrote and published, in one of our most popular newspapers, against the Christian Sabbath. I answered it. He wrote again; and I am this day about to prepare a rejoinder. May God put to confusion the counsel of the wicked.

I have volunteered to ride and preach three months between this and next Presbytery. May God grant me the spirit of a missionary. Pray for me. Love to sister Calhoun, your father, Provine, Aston, Foster, McSpedden, and all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Your brother in the strongest bonds,

FINIS EWING.

To Rev. William Harris.

EWINGSVILLE, August 28, 1816.

DEAR BROTHER:— * * * * * Now for better things. At Antioch we had a large collection of well behaved people. It was a precious meeting. The Lord revived his work. There were much harmony and union among God's people of different names. Never before, in that part of the country, have I witnessed so large and interesting a communion. Several of our Baptist brethren leaped the wall. By request I spoke on Saturday, between two and three hours, on the subject of baptism. I hope good was done. My views seemed to myself unusually clear, and I believe none took offence at the truth. I fenced the table; and I thought I had aid from on high in my exhortations. We received many young converts, and nine adults were baptized, six by our mode, two went down into the water, and

one under the water. Many persons were convicted, and twenty-two professed religion, among whom were the following. * * * *

Give my love to sister Harris and your children. Tell the latter that many young people, westward and in this region, are seeking and obtaining the one thing needful. Honor to God. Eternal honor to God. I know you will say amen.

Yours in Christ,

FINIS EWING.

In the fall of 1816, Mr. Ewing was for some time confined with lameness in one of his knees. How this was occasioned is not known. The fact appears from the following extract:

To Rev. William Harris.

MONDAY NIGHT, Nov. 19, 1816.

DEAR BROTHER HARRIS:—This day three weeks, the Doctor operated on my knee, since which, except a day or two immediately after the operation, I have been closely confined to my house and my bed. And from present appearances, it seems that I may be much longer confined, if I ever am restored to health and soundness. The Doctor is skillful and honest; and is disposed to encourage my hopes. But my impediment is in a critical place and very difficult to cure. It is a little better; but I cannot perceive that the immediate wound has healed any: it inclines more to bleed than to heal. Indeed I have endured much pain for a few days; and I regret to reflect that I did not bear it with as much patience as I ought, though more than I expected. I have believed from the first, it endangered my life; but death seems to have no deadly sting. Still endearing ties draw me to life; my family, my brethren, the church, above all, the Lord's blessed cause and the danger of immortal souls. I want you to pray for me. I wish you could visit and preach for me. How I long to hear a sermon! I will not insist, if it would be to your disadvantage or the neglect of important duties.

* * * *

I hope God will be with you in your deliberations in Presbytery. I think it would be proper to license Brother Morrow; but will not dictate. I long to be able again to blow the gospel trumpet. I have

not been so long and closely confined for eighteen years. May the Lord give me patience and resignation. If you cannot soon visit me, write to me lengthily from Presbytery.

Your brother in the faith of Christ,

FINIS EWING.

In 1817, Mr. Ewing, by his preaching, correspondence, and personal solicitations, exerted himself in the counties in the Green River country, for the formation of a Bible Society; and succeeded to a considerable extent in enlisting all the other denominations in the enterprise. In one of his letters to Mr. Harris, he proposes by name two preachers or prominent members belonging to the four different denominations in the country, for managers, and recommends the name of the "Green River Bible Society."

CHAPTER XVII.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH BRETHREN.

Three letters to A. Aston:—How to avoid temptation—Encouraging promises—Religious consolations—Thanksgiving for the victory at New Orleans—A church difficulty—Harsh censure opposed to charity—Recommends tenderness—Concert of prayer—Necessity of holiness—Cheering prospects—Inquiries—Diligence in duty—Perseverance in prayer—A spiritual child—Preaching at Russelville—Conclusion of a letter to R. Donnell:—Argument against the Arian's Christ—Human speculations—Nashville—Meeting in the cabins.

THE extensiveness of Mr. Ewing's correspondence has been already alluded to. He seems to have neglected no opportunity of doing good by the exercise of his pen. Whenever he saw times and circumstances favorable for the inculcation of virtue, the correction of vice, the encouragement of Christian union, the healing of dissensions, the promotion of brotherly kindness, or the sowing of good seed for the advancement of God's glory and man's best interests; then he was neither indolent nor lukewarm; then his voice was raised and his pen employed in behalf of divine truth and human duty. In illustration of this, three of his letters are here inserted, which were written at their respective dates, to a pious and intelligent layman, an elder in the church, one of the first, and probably at the present time, one of the oldest of its living members, who still honors his profession, and edifies by his

example; and whose name will occupy a place on memory's page, when he shall have gone to his reward. These letters might have been distributed among different chapters, according to their dates; but it is thought best to give them in consecutive order. The reader will have no difficulty in understanding whatever is contained in them, by referring to the times at which they were written. The gentleman to whom they were addressed, has been, since the year 1800, an elder in the congregation of Big Spring, Wilson county, Tenn., long under the pastoral care of Rev. Thomas Calhoun, but at present under the care of Rev. P. Y. Davis.

To Mr. Alexander Aston.

EWINGSVILLE, January 28, 1815.

DEAR BROTHER: — When you feel impatient, because you do not receive a letter from me, please to bear in mind that where you are disposed to write one letter, I probably am compelled to write ten.

* * * * I am sorry for your affliction, but think you would rather receive chastisement as a son, than to be without it as a bastard. * * * * *

You ask for direction, "how to keep out of the way of temptation?" I really cannot tell you, unless you could first contrive to destroy the devil; for assuredly if he tempted our pure Lord, his holy Apostles &c., he will not be reluctant nor slow to tempt you and me. But, my brother, do you not well know that temptation, if successfully resisted, is not sin? Satan will worry whom he cannot devour. And let us not think strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us, as though some strange thing had happened unto us. For with the temptation, he will make a way of escape. He *will* do it. What do Job, Paul and, John say? "The righteous shall hold on his way." Neither life nor death, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God. He that is born of God cannot sin, (that is the sin unto death) because his seed remaineth in him. But if it were not for God's immutable love, Christ's continued intercession, the Holy

Ghost's guiding into all (necessary) truth, I do believe the prince of the power of the air would overcome us. Yet it is the divine command and our constant duty to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. This brings to mind the good old doctrine taught in the Bible and also in our own creed, viz: grace and duty. I see and feel many difficulties in both flesh and spirit in my heavenward progress; but I can say, hitherto the Lord has helped me. Last Sabbath week, he made my heart sweetly burn, while I was trying to expound his word, in a new place, to a most solemn, attentive, and feeling audience. Thursday night following, at society meeting, Christ gave me a most sweet report on his soul-animating, sin-killing love. So you see, God is graciously kind to me; for I verily do believe, it is among the greatest wonders of his grace to visit such a creature as I with his smiles.

On Wednesday evening last, we heard of the great victory which Jackson and his army achieved over our deadly enemy. The next night we repaired to the temple or place appointed for prayer, to render unto the God of battles thanksgiving and praise, for his signal interposition. O, if God's people would fast and pray much, God would establish our rights and perpetuate our liberty.

Give my love to Brother Calhoun, his family and your own. Tell your children not to rest till they know that God is their Father, Christ is their elder brother, and the Holy Ghost their sanctifier. My love to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.

Your brother,

FINIS EWING.

To Mr. Alexander Aston.

EWINGSVILLE, April 4, 1817.

DEAR BROTHER: * * * * * You request that I should write you "a strong letter" that will with a blessing make you shout. I will not promise such a letter, but if I should convict you, you may perhaps rejoice in due season.

Your letter truly afflicted me. I have sorrow of heart indeed for the disturbance in your congregation, and particularly so, that it happened at the time it did. As for Brother T. Calhoun, I think him incapable of doing a wrong action *knowingly*. I am glad that Brother F—— has, according to your letter, virtually cleared Brother Calhoun of all blame. But you say, if Brother Calhoun had taken

an active part in helping his brother to procure the vacant land near Brother F——'s you do not think he would have been to blame. I do not agree with you. Although the land was vacant, I do not think it would have been friendly and brotherly not to have told F——, as it was in his way, and thereby have given him an opportunity to enter it. But I am glad Brother Calhoun had nothing to do with it, according to his usual discretion.

Now, my dear brother, allow me in all faithfulness to reprove you for the insinuation that it was faithful preaching which caused all this disturbance. This seems to be entering into the motives of men; nay more, it seems to be searching the heart. It is virtually saying that F—— got angry and acted wickedly, because he heard faithful preaching. These hard censures seem somewhat opposed to that charity that hopeth and believeth all things. Indeed, my brother, it seems contrary to that spirit which your letters and conversation generally breathe. I doubt not but Brother F—— may have done wrong; but the good book says, "yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." He is a man of whom I have thought highly. But he inherits human nature; and I suppose he thought himself ill-treated, and gave way to too much passion. But I am greatly mistaken, if he be not an honorable man, also if he have not felt the power of grace on his heart. With these views I would recommend that he be treated with a great deal of tenderness.

I am afraid, my dear brother, there is not so much religion among you as formerly. I judge from the disturbance of which you speak, and likewise from the spirit of your letter. For it does not breathe half so much of the spirit of grace as the letters you have formerly written to me. I am not finding fault with the history of the disturbance you gave me; for that I thank you. But I cannot perceive and do not feel the holy, meek, and spiritual strain in it that is usual from your pen.

Through the unmerited grace of a sovereign God, we are at peace here with one another; and I trust we, or the most of us, often feel peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We keep up our weekly prayer meetings, whether it be cold or hot, dark or light; and for some months, I think there has not been one, without manifestations of God's sweet presence. I trust a great part of the congregation have made up their minds to be devoted to the Lord

in all things. Latterly, I think, Zion begins to travail. We have mutually agreed to meet at the divine throne, every evening, about dusk, to wrestle at the same moment, for God to revive his work. Will you all join us?

Tell Brother Calhoun that I have, at times latterly, felt the most acute pains and uncommon anxiety for Zion, for the holiness of God's ministers and people as well as for the salvation of sinners. May they who bear the vessels of the Lord have clean hands and pure hearts. O Lord, give Zion purity and pangs. "O Lord, revive thy work." I have for some time past been trying in my sermons to inculcate the necessity of holiness among the Lord's people, in order to the revival and advancement of his gracious work. I find just in proportion to my living holy, I am successful in inculcating holiness on God's people. O how exemplary ought all ministers, elders, church officers, and members to be. Lord make us all more so.

I think the principal of our Academy and a few more are thinking seriously about their salvation. The work of conversion goes on in Caldwell. There is a great revival in New York. The good work is spreading in pagan lands. Some of the outcasts of Israel are gathering in. Romanists are abandoning their superstitions. I cannot help thinking the latter-day glory is dawning. Lord hasten it. * *

FINIS EWING.

To Mr. Alexander Aston.

EWINGSVILLE, February 2, 1819.

MY GOOD BROTHER ASTON:—I received yours of the 10th ult. this day. I am glad to hear that you and family are well, but more pleased to learn that your soul prospers. Brother Calhoun had, just before I received yours, informed me of the gracious work in progress in your neighborhood. I shall tell Mr. Baker's relatives here, when I see them, of his having found the pearl of great price. I know it will rejoice their hearts. I am glad to hear that brother Calhoun is so industrious in the work, and that brother Dilliard preached so good a sermon for you. Is he, with all the other ministering brethren in your Presbytery, working while it is called to-day? Are they feeling and carrying about with them daily the dying of the Lord Jesus? Are they lifting up their voices, like trumpets, crying aloud and sparing not? Is there a holy strife among them, who shall do

the most good? Who shall be most humble, most patient, most meek, most zealous, most useful? And are the elders helping? Are they holding up the hands of their ministers? Are they encouraging their hearts? Are they with one accord rolling at Zion's wheels, without fainting? The work required of preachers, elders, and laity, in promoting the good cause, is different from other kind of work: to work very hard for natural things, tends to faintness; but to work indolently, and do but little in spiritual things, tends not only to faintness, but debility. It is he that renews his spiritual strength who shall run and not grow weary, walk and not faint. Who renews his strength? He that waiteth on the Lord. How? Not slothfully, nor seldom, nor half-heartedly, but humbly, fervently, diligently, often. I have thought that Christians ought never to meet for the purpose of social worship, *and part without a blessing*. You may ask me how they will help it sometimes? I answer, always, when men, saints or sinners, get to the end of their own strength, God does not defer to come. Then will Christians meet and part without a blessing, rather than row against the stream of self, till that monster die. I have thought it would be a good way for Christians, when they meet, to do their duty, and if the Lord does not come to bless them, to try again and again, until he does come. Frequent unsuccessful trials tend to discourage, I know; but they also tend to empty us of self, of wrong expectations, of dependence on men, means, &c. Although we have been a thousand times convinced that our strength is weakness, yet we are willing to try it again; and while this is indirectly the case, the good Lord does not bless. But repeated hard trials of our own might are apt to bring us to our senses; and whenever we are properly brought to our senses, we cry from the depth of our hearts, Lord, help! Then he will, and always does help.

I have just returned from Russellville, where I have been trying to teach day and night, baptizing individuals and whole households, after the example of the Apostles. The good work is going on there in power. Last night I found out a well favored child there, the sister of a wealthy merchant, who was lately born, and claims one so poor and unworthy as I am, for her spiritual father. O, the amazing condescension of the great Head of the Church to use such a worm, the least of saints, the greatest of sinners, as an instrument to bring

a soul from the confines of damnation into the glorious liberty of a Christian. I will command my heart to say, "not unto us," &c. I preached in town night before last, and invited those who desired religion to kneel; and we would pray for them. I think there were at least four score who obeyed the invitation. Lord, carry on thy work. In my own neighborhood, God's people — what few remain — now and then get into the banqueting house. Last Thursday night some sinners cried for mercy. But it seems as if the society will break up, by removals to Missouri. Then what will I do?

Many of my children are unwell with something like the influenza; but I hope God will heal them. Give my love to all the brethren, and accept for yourself assurances of brotherly love,

FINIS EWING.

The following is the conclusion of a letter of two sheets to Rev. Robert Donnell; the entire first sheet is wanting; and of course its date cannot be ascertained. It may be inserted here. It contains some of the writer's views on the atonement, the divinity of Jesus Christ, &c. The letter was probably written and the discourse referred to, preached during the memorable period when the New Lights almost appeared to be "compassing sea and land to make one proselyte to their Arian heresy:"

I have this day (for you will remember this is Sabbath evening, my family have retired to rest) tried to preach from these words: "For Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." In treating the subject, my mind was led to some thoughts not common to myself. First, it was not necessary that the law should have been revealed to Adam in his primitive state, in the same manner it was revealed to fallen men. "It was added," says the Apostle, "because of transgression," that is, it was written so definitely, that the transgressor, however blind, &c., who would read, would feel more or less guilt, which naturally would, or ought to excite an inquiry, how shall I be delivered from this guilt? Not so

with pure Adam: he was made in the model of the law. His soul was like it. He naturally breathed its very essence and principles. It was engraven on his heart; and his nature was to obey the law he loved.

Again, in speaking of Christ, the substitute, who obeyed the law and suffered its penalty for men; I was led to contemplate the Arian's Christ, and what the law would say to him; the conclusion was irresistible that the law would demand from him just what it does from Gabriel and Adam. And though he surpass Gabriel by countless millions of degrees, the law commands him to love the Lord his God with all his heart, &c. Then where is any obedience or suffering to spare, or satisfy for another? The infinite fund of righteousness, of which McWhirter so forcibly speaks, would dwindle into less than a mere mite, a negative quantity of nothing.

I am pleased to hear of the friendly disposition of Mr. Anderson, with whom you say you rode and conversed. But I really think, if his subtle distinctions and little refinements, upon stubborn truth, the plain simple gospel plan, were laid aside, and the time which it takes to study out, communicate, and maintain these little ingenious nothings, were spent in praying for sinners, and devising the best methods of catching them in the gospel net, it might be better for the world. My heart sickens when I think how large a portion of the religious world have spent precious time, squandered promising talents, and written many volumes, upon what can be regarded as nothing better than a little wood, hay, or stubble — engendering feuds. What a shame, nay more, what a sin for a Christian to be disputing about questions and words to no profit. Truth revealed, to be sure, is valuable in all its parts; but let us ever hold human speculations to be of minor importance. Let fundamental truths and their practical influence on our hearts and on our hearers ever be uppermost in our minds.

This day, has returned my desire for meeting you in Nashville, to hold a sacramental meeting. My impressions are strong that this is our duty. I believe you know me to be not very enthusiastic; yet such are my yearnings of spirit over that place, that I cannot remove it from my thoughts. Who knows but God has much people there, whose condition and character might be developed, even by the Cumberland Presbyterians holding a communion in the place.

Could you not make the necessary arrangements? And let the meeting be as soon as the weather will admit: say the middle of April.

We have recently moved into our little cabins. On some accounts the change is rather disagreeable. But you know that not only cabins, but prisons would palaces prove, if Christ were with us. We have had one prayer meeting since we moved; and the Lord was present. O, the condescension of our dear Lord Jesus.

Two poor immortals, black men, were condemned to be hung, at our last court, for an attempt to kill a tyrannical master. They are to be executed on the 9th of next month.

My fingers are becoming tired, and my second sheet nearly filled. I must conclude, by requesting you to pray for me and mine, hoping you will take example from my quantity, not my quality, and write as long an answer. You cannot be at a loss for matter, when you have a divine Saviour to write about. Remember me most affectionately to Brother Erwin and lady, and receive my assurances of unaltered esteem and regard.

FINIS EWING.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CORRESPONDENCE CONTINUED.

Inducements to emigrate — Removals from Lebanon — Character of the emigrants — Labors of Messrs. Bourne and Tandy — A wise Providence — Letter to R. Donnell — Discouragements — Regard for King — Submission — Signs of the millenium — Brought in by means — Christian duty — Death of McGready and McGee — Letter to W. Harris — Bible and Missionary Societies — Request of a Chillicothe editor — Letter to R. Donnell — Motives for obeying a call — Devices of Satan — Paul — Bible Society — Its patrons — Other Societies — How to be sustained — Mammon — Parental Solicitude — Ewing's temperament — Letter to R. Donnell — Tender affection — Camp meeting at Lebanon — Thirty professions.

THE people of the west have rendered themselves remarkable for their love of change and repeated removals in order to improve their circumstances. This is applicable to a considerable portion of the first settlers of Kentucky and Tennessee. No sooner were the government lands in the new territories offered for sale, than a desire sprung up in many an agricultural community to go and possess them. Many who had originally purchased land at a low rate, seeing the enhancement which time and industry had wrought in its value, were anxious to repeat the experiment on a still larger scale, in the fertile regions of the south and west. The privations and hardships of a new country had few terrors to them; they had encountered and endured them all. It was not so with the emigrants from

Virginia and the Carolinas, who were leaving their worn out lands at home for the rich soil of a new country. These, having been always accustomed to an improved and somewhat polished state of society, had no fancy for the wilderness. Their fortunes could be as much improved, by purchasing lands of the Kentucky and Tennessee farmers, as those of the latter could be by their sale and the possession of a number of acres, many times multiplied, in the new territories. The prospects as well as the offers were tempting to both parties; and in a few years, great numbers of Tennesseans and Kentuckians were found dispersed over the then territories of Alabama, Mississippi, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas.

A very large emigration to Missouri from Mr. Ewing's congregation occurred, between 1817 and 1820; inso-much that old Lebanon, the mother of churches and the glory of southern Kentucky, became a feeble congregation. And although the revival continued in various places, in some with great power, this neighborhood became like Egypt, when "a new king arose who knew not Joseph;" and the hearts of the few Cumberland Presbyterians who still remained were only occasionally cheered by witnessing conversions in their midst. The new comers were a highly respectable and wealthy class of people, but were not generally very favorably disposed towards religion; and those among them who were so, had very little love for Presbyterianism. Besides they had come here to repair or increase their fortunes, and advance the interests of their families;

and the fertility of the soil promising to their industry the highest rewards, the great strife among them seemed to be, who should raise the largest crops of tobacco and other products, according to their number of working hands. Hence they had but little time to devote to religion, and in some cases less inclination to consider this all-important subject. And it was not until some time after the removal of the great body of Mr. Ewing's congregation and of their pastor, that religion seemed in any good degree to revive in that neighborhood. This was effected through the instrumentality of two truly pious and devoted Baptist ministers, Rev. Messrs. Tandy and Bourne, who laudably taking advantage of whatever early religious prepossessions still existed among these people, and preaching to them in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, a blessed work of grace ensued. The result was, flourishing Baptist churches were collected on the very ground once occupied by the Lebanon congregation.

Mr. Ewing, seeing the families of his congregation removing and their places occupied by those who were not at the time a church-going people, and some of them not very strict observers of the Sabbath, became greatly discouraged, still crying to the Lord for help. Although his letters to Rev. William Harris suffered the disaster of being saturated with water, and are much mutilated, enough can be read to show the anguish of his spirit at this juncture. And a knowledge of the facts above stated will explain some otherwise obscure passages in his correspondence with Rev. Robert Donnell.

But here let us pause to admire the inscrutableness of an all-wise and merciful Providence, whose design in the foregoing occurrences doubtless was, and the event has fully demonstrated, that this congregation and their pastor himself should go forth into the new Missouri Territory, scattering the good seed broadcast and erecting the standard of the cross in various places, where he and they could accomplish ten times as much for the Saviour's cause as they could ever do in Kentucky.

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, January 23d, 1818.

MY DEAR BROTHER:—I received and read yours of two sheets, on yesterday. Its contents were very interesting and rather *provoking*: I wish I were more easily provoked. I wish I had as good news to communicate as I received in yours; but alas the remainder of the vine left here seems not in a very flourishing condition. Yet God comforts his people; and now and then in the suburbs around, truth finds its way to a sinner's heart. At a place where I had meeting, last Sabbath, in the day and at night, an old inebriate, a Roman Catholic, was seriously affected. This circumstance and some others similar, bring to recollection the truth of your remark, "that God can work on the hearts of the emigrants." Yes, it is true, he can; but it is not so probable that he will, especially on those who will not often hear his word, and who seem to bend every power of soul and body to the augmentation of their god mammon, to as large a size as possible. I am often in a strait, and know not what kind Heaven designs to do; but desire with humble submission to say, "O Lord, thy will be done."

* * * * *

I would be extremely glad to meet you and Brother King in Nashville. I am anxious to see you both, hear you preach, and talk with you about Zion's precious interests. For notwithstanding Brother King and I take different views and maintain different sides of the same question, in our judicatures, as an old associate, as one who has helped me to "bear the burden and heat of the day," as an

eminent Christian and faithful minister of Jesus Christ, I feel my heart knit to him, as was David's to Jonathan.

Can you not so arrange that when you visit Nashville, you can proceed to my house, with your manuscript. I wish much to see it. But I wish to see you with it. I hope you will publish that discourse. I think it is due to the memory of the deceased as well as to the church of God.

Were I to consult only my inclination, I would soon visit your country; but duty to a large family as well as to God's people who still continue here, frequently forbid my following my own inclination. If I were to go, I might have some desire to attend the land sales, but I think a still greater desire to be at a good camp meeting.

I am about to settle a new place in this neighborhood; but my stay at it is very uncertain. Yet your suggestion about my continuing somewhere nearer the centre of our religious connection than Missouri, has had considerable weight on my mind. Your last, indeed, in many parts, has had more than ordinary weight, and called up many reflections. I do wish you would cry mightily to God, to make his will known to me in all things. Seldom do I approach the throne in secret, but you, in particular, are a subject of a part of my poor petitions. This is my duty, my privilege.

Last Sabbath I tried to preach from "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." I felt aid. I trust the word had some good effect. Last night I attended prayer meeting, and got a sweet repast to my poor soul. Although the meeting in general was not as lively as usual, I think I had stronger faith than common. I had been reading the Herald and your letter, both of which tended to stir up what little of the grace of faith I possessed. I sometimes have pleasing anticipations of a general work of God, throughout the habitable globe. But when I witness around me, among the new emigrants, so much inattention to eternal things, I feel somewhat discouraged. I am, however, less local in my feelings on this subject than formerly. Although it would be exceedingly pleasant for us to see all with whom we are conversant, or have intercourse, bow to the divine sceptre, yet God is, perhaps, as much glorified in the conversion of an idolatrous Pagan priest, as in a gospel hardened sinner. But surely the signs of the times indicate that the great Head of the Church is about to take to himself his great power, and reign gloriously. Cannot we

already begin to hear the distant sound of some of the first blasts of the trump which is to proclaim the jubilee to the church? Lord, hasten it. Although I love my family, and do not regret that I have one, yet I sometimes almost envy you your glorious privilege of devoting yourself entirely and uninterruptedly to the work of God—to instrumentally ushering in that long expected, long prayed for, and glorious Sabbath year—I mean the millenium. I am more than ever convinced that this blessed period is not far distant, and is to be brought about by means, and not by miracles, I may not live to see it; you may not; but still it will come with its manifold blessings. The Christian, whether in a public or private capacity, who folds his hands and cries “a little more sleep,” &c., seems doubly guilty. The twilight of the blessed day seems to beckon to all the spiritual husbandmen to be up and doing, to turn into the vast field, each in his own sphere, and become “workers together with God.” O, if the most obscure and humble Christian, male or female, would only consider what he or she could do by prayer, faith, zeal, example, contributions, &c., towards ushering in the latter-day glory, surely they would crucify the flesh, abandon all false delicacy, and push in good earnest at Zion’s wheels. The opportunity of being instrumental in saving a soul, will soon, very soon, be eternally at an end, as respects all who now live on the earth. Ought not every one who names the name of Christ, often to ask him or herself, have I this day, this week, this month, done all I could for the salvation of sinners, for the coming of the kingdom of God?

It is my painful task to announce that another “great man in Israel has fallen!” Father McGready is no more! Yet he liveth. For faithfulness and usefulness he left behind few, if any, equals. This is a great loss to mankind, and especially to that branch of the church to which he belonged. But his Master called for him, and he has gone to wear that crown in which, I doubt not, there are many stars. I cannot help trembling for the cause when such men as McGee and McGready are called from Zion’s walls. O Lord, help us to make a right improvement of these solemn dispensations, and do, O Lord, supply their places in the church. Give my love to your landlord and lady. I love them because they love you and the church of God.

Yours, in bonds stronger than death,

FINIS EWING.

To Rev. William Harris.

EWINGVILLE, January 24th, 1818.

DEAR BROTHER:—I received yours written at Russelville, advising me that the constitutions of our Bible and Female Missionary Societies have been published; since which I have received and distributed the copies. I am afraid we will not succeed well in these two enterprises, in this part of the country, owing principally to the clause which binds the member and his purse for life. I am extremely sorry that the clause was admitted; since it can answer no good purpose. The very nature of the institution would preclude coercion in case of refusal or neglect to pay; and many may be frightened from joining at all. I do not anticipate any remarkable success, till that clause is altered; but mean to do all I can to increase our subscriptions and members. Was any one appointed to preach a sermon at the first meeting of the managers? If not, ought not yourself or some one to prepare a discourse adapted to the occasion? And ought not notice to be publicly given, that such discourse will be preached? Whom shall we appoint President and Corresponding Secretary? I assure you, I am at a loss to decide. We want qualified men who are not merely friends of the Bible, but who are ardent and zealous for its universal circulation, men who have a mind for the work.

With regard to the request that I would write out a synopsis of our doctrinal views with their effects, for the Chillicothe paper, I must say, I have neither sufficient leisure nor (you will pardon me) much inclination to do so. Surely the editor has seen Buck's Theological Dictionary, if not our Confession of Faith. If he has seen neither, Mr. S—— has seen both. With respect to the effects produced, I thought, and presume he thinks, Mr. S—— tells him of these, every time he communicates to him on the subject. There is something implied in the editor's request with which I am not fully satisfied. But if you think proper, I am willing that you or Mr. S—— should comply with the editor's request.

* * * * *

My love to Sister Harris, my namesake, and your family, and believe me to be, as ever,

Your devoted brother,

FINIS EWING.

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, March 18th, 1818.

DEAR ROBERT: * * * * In part I think I understand your feelings, on the subject of your call to preach at Nashville. I would heartily say with you, if it be the mind of the Lord, and he will be with you, I wish you to go, but not otherwise. I am glad you seem so deeply sensible of the necessity of humility: "He that abaseth himself shall be exalted." With this sentiment ever impressed on your heart, I would advise you to make the attempt, in the name of the Lord, to save some of the precious souls in that city. But if money, or popularity, enter but partially into your views, in attending to the call of those people, I would advise you not to go: for in that case God would curse and ultimately disgrace you. I would observe, however, that there is a great difference between the *admission into the heart*, of a desire for "filthy lucre" or vain glory, and a temptation to these things. The former brings darkness and the frowns of Jehovah, while the latter, if vigorously resisted with unceasing prayer, does not even leave guilt on the conscience. The devil knows the tender, as well as the unsanctified, parts of gospel ministers; consequently, he sometimes tempts them to mercenary and improper motives, with a mere design to make them so strongly suspect themselves that they are afraid to do *duty*, lest they should do it from improper motives. I imagine this device of Satan is not at all uncommon with the man on whom the Lord lays the necessity to preach, about the time he is first determining whether he will submit to the call or not. "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices." With regard to any danger from the heart becoming lifted up by the flattering attentions and applause of men, a good way to put it down is to ask ourselves, who maketh us to differ? &c. And what have we that we do not receive from the Lord? Paul was the greatest of the Apostles. He abounded most in visions and the work of the Lord. Yet I am persuaded, if we except holy John, that he was the most humble among the twelve.

As to my preaching in Nashville, once a month, I am not yet impressed that it is the mind of the Lord. If I should be, I would wish ever to feel the readiness of the Prophet, and say, "Lord, here am I," &c. You seem to lay heavy, if not grievous burdens upon me, in requiring me to go to Canaan, to Nashville and to write for the church. I do not say, you do not touch them yourself; but I do say

your friendship, zeal, &c., have caused you, at least partially, to forget that there are many precious souls in this region of country, and that I must pay some attention to the support, education, moral training, &c., of my own household. However I am much better pleased with the spiritual eyes that see so much to do, that they excite their possessor to do all he can himself and to call for help from every quarter, than with those eyes that see but little necessity for exertion. I will say it is barely possible that brother William Barnett and myself may attend your sacrament at Canaan, and preach at Nashville on our way to, and from that place. * * *

The managers of the Green River Bible Society held their first meeting in Russellville, about ten days since. The friends of the Bible are encouraged, hoping the institution will prosper. I, as a manager, have been trying to excite my brother managers to emulation by industry in the good cause. Before the first meeting I collected more money than any other individual. Before the last, brother Wm. Barnett, with the aid of a few auxiliaries, collected more than I did. But I am sorry to say, that he and I collected more than all the balance of twenty managers. I mention the circumstance to inform you, that as yet, the Cumberland Presbyterians are the principal patrons of the institution; although they have but one fourth part in its management. I expect, however, that it will be more liberally patronized by the three other sects before long. A tract society also has been formed, which has begun to distribute its tracts. I anticipate great benefit to the church, from these and other similar institutions, contemplated in this part of the country. Not long since, a female missionary society was organized in this and brother Barnett's congregations; and the Logan Presbytery has appointed a missionary board. If this should become general or universal, as I trust in God it will, through the bounds of our operations, we may anticipate incalculably good results. A little retrenchment of unnecessary expenses, the practice of a little economy and self-denial — all acting in concert — would enable the females who are friends to Zion to keep constantly employed a number of faithful, zealous, missionaries, on our frontiers and elsewhere, whose labors, I doubt not, God would own and bless to the salvation of many immortal souls. And O, my God, what female, who loves the Lord Jesus Christ would not content herself with a less splendid dress, and deny herself other ornaments of the body, to become the means of saving

a soul from eternal death! I do trust and believe the time is fast approaching when the true followers of Christ will see and feel the necessity of doing as well as talking. I think God, in his providence and grace, is about to bring the Christian world to the touch-stone of experiment. Hitherto we have professed to love God, the eternal, supremely; while our practice seemed to bear but too strong testimony that *mammon* was supreme in our affections, by the death-grip we would hold on to him. But, by the rolling on of the mysterious wheels of divine providence, so many objects, calling for money, begin to present themselves in succession—all too having for their aim and end the honor of God, and the advancement of his kingdom—that, I think, those who are, and those who are not, on the Lord's side must soon show themselves. Doubtless that short, simple, and oft repeated maxim, "ye cannot serve God and mammon" has by many been but imperfectly understood.

Your letter and one received at the same time from brother McLin, produced in my mind unusual sensations. I do think God made them a blessing to my soul; although they gave rise to some embarrassment with regard to certain subjects therein touched. I read them to the congregation, and, I trust, not without good effect. If you take many hasty journeys, I hope you will not neglect to write; for if you cannot do otherwise, you can once a week take an hour from the time allotted to sleep, to drop a line to your obliged but unworthy friend.

It made my soul rejoice, when I heard that your good landlord's heart caught fire in Nashville. I do wish in my soul the whole town had become conflagrated to the consumption of sin. The wrath of God will ultimately burn to the lowest hell; and the love of God in the regenerated heart will burn to the highest heaven.

Remember me most affectionately to dear Bro. Erwin and his excellent lady. Tell them that I want them, especially when their hearts are right warm with divine love, to pray much for me and my household. O, yes, for my household too. My heart is afflicted. If indeed, God ever designs to save my family, he seems long to delay his coming. I know he is just. But O, the anxiety of parental hearts! If I have friends among the brethren in your part, I would authorize you, nay, I would enjoin it on you, to enlist them to besiege a divine throne in behalf of my unconverted family, begging the Lord to save them, not for mine, but for Jesus' sake.

If you should conclude to preach in Nashville statedly, I do hope you will now and then slip over to Christian county, and I may sometimes slip over to Nashville, when you are there. I sometimes feel very much as you expressed yourself in your last, that I wanted to preach everywhere, and yet it seems difficult to get to but comparatively few places. Lord, send more laborers.

We have in this Presbytery at present, some promising young men, who are on trial. I trust God, the Lord of the vineyard, will give them large hire, in souls, for their labors of love.

I trust I was assisted on last Sabbath in preaching from "And whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." It seemed that mammon was compelled to yield in the minds of many, and become subservient to the cause of the only wise God.

When you see the brethren in the ministry, give my love to them all, and receive for yourself what can be felt, but not expressed.

FINIS EWING.

P. S. I was pleased to learn from brother Barnett, that brother King's zeal burns like fire, Lord, increase it in the hearts of *all* thy ministers.

F. E.

Mr. Ewing was, as the reader by this time must have learned, a man of ardent temperament. His sensibilities were acute, and his feelings strong. While he had no very high regard for the dull and lukewarm professor, his tender sympathies were always awake in behalf of the zealous and devoted Christian. And while he seemed to exercise but little patience with the minister of the gospel who could indulge in ease and indolence, his heart glowed with fraternal affection for the man who gave himself wholly to the work of the Lord. If neglect of duty aroused his indignation, faithfulness and devotedness excited his gratitude, and won his love. And whether the current of his feelings

partook of the character of the storm or the zephyr, it was generally guided by reason, and controlled by principle. His letters to Rev. Robert Donnell, whom he regarded as one of the most laborious and useful ministers of his day, abound with delicate expressions of friendship and love. These have been omitted, because they may not be consonant with the taste of general readers. One specimen, however, may be admitted in the following :

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, June 27th, 1818.

MY DEAR DONNELL: — You may begin to charge me with neglect ere you receive this, but I was reluctant to write until after our camp meeting at this place, which included the last Sabbath. If I neglect you, I shall act very contrary to the constant feelings of my heart. For I can assure you, my late agreeable interview with you did not lessen my former attachment, but strongly increased it. However deficient and wretched I am myself, there is something in me that spontaneously flows towards that man who abounds in the good work of God. Such I will esteem highly for their works' sake and the Lord's sake. I would seriously doubt my religion if my heart were capable of feeling cold towards a minister of Christ, whose soul and body are, from day to day, laboriously employed for the welfare of Zion; and who, I doubt not, "is always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." Never did I feel stronger sympathy for you than when we were about to part. I saw what responsibility, what care, what numerous calls for ministerial labor you had, and with but few to help you. The Lord send you aid. O Lord, send aid to thy cause. But for you and me, there is one consolation: "As thy day is so shall thy strength be."

Doubtless you have heard before this, that brother Barnett and myself have had prosperous seasons, after we left you, in witnessing the conviction and conversion of sinners and in seeing my favorite plan* taking so cordially among the dear godly females. The

* The Female Missionary Society.

affection, the gratitude, the tears of joy, manifested on the occasion of our visit to "the Forks," made strong impressions on my mind. I have no doubt but it was all of the Lord: not only our meeting there, but yours at Cain creek. If our motives be pure, and our hearts constantly dependent on God, he will overrule our appointments, for his own glory and the good of souls: he will not permit us to give a wrong touch to his cause.

When I arrived at home, I found all well, except Mrs. Ewing, whose health, I fear, is declining. O Lord, if it please thee, give to her health of body as well as of soul. Our camp meeting came on yesterday week. The Lord was present. We had five sectaries to commune together. The brethren enjoined it on me to fence the table and give the invitation. I had some light. Almost every sermon which was preached, during the occasion, seemed to be attended with divine aid and blessing. On Saturday evening, two professed religion, and on the Sabbath, five. On Monday brother Buie preached well; brother Chapman followed him, whose sermon was attended with much power. There was considerable feeling. Mourners were yet before the stand, praying. Some of the brethren felt impressed that I ought to preach on a certain subject. Brother Wm. Barnett strongly insisted that I should do so forthwith. I felt fearful, but consented. The first part of my sermon was argumentative. One young woman professed while I was preaching; but God would so have it, that she was not able to make one word of noise, till preaching was over. O I do believe that God allowed the people to hear. Though conscious of my own great unworthiness and of my utter inability to profit one soul, without aid from above, I cannot doubt but much good resulted: more immediate good perhaps than ever did from a sermon of mine. Within a few minutes the south wind came; and four or five were liberated, perhaps within one minute. There were little intervals between the heavenly breezes, until near daylight. It was literally a gospel sweeping shower. It was almost impossible to tell how many professed; but it is believed about twenty-three found the Lord precious that evening: some think more, making in all, thirty. I do not know how many; but I never saw such a time at Lebanon, except once, shortly after the earthquake. There were three wagons which came between twenty and thirty miles, and brought nine unconverted persons in them; they took away every one of the nine, hopefully converted, and, I

trust, all true Christians. The young converts were generally very clear in their evidences, and spiritual in their exercises. Let eternal and undivided honor be ascribed to God, our Saviour.

Pray for me and mine. Love to the brethren. Write often. And believe me to be yours,

In bonds stronger than death,

FINIS EWING.

CHAPTER XIX.

TRUTH TRIUMPHS.

The Arian heresy — Successfully opposed — Hopkinsville — Discourses there — Contest with an Arian — Missing letter — Barnett — Blackburn — Doctrines — Reproof — Meeting at Russelville — Valentine Cook — Sermon and exhortation — Crowd of mourners — Many professions — The converts — The Hamiltons.

THE people usually known as New Lights, but sometimes called Stoneites or Marshalites, from Stone and Marshal, who were their most prominent preachers are in Mr. Ewing's correspondence generally termed Arians. Their views respecting the doctrines of the Trinity and the divinity of Jesus Christ, appear to have been extremely absurd and unscriptural. They arose in upper Kentucky, only a few years after the commencement of the revival of 1800, flourished for a while, but finally have been absorbed by other sects. Certain Presbyterian writers and talkers — whether ignorantly or maliciously it is not easy to determine — have endeavored to confound the Cumberland Presbyterians with these people, and to lead the world to believe that the former have fallen into delusions similar to those of the latter. Nothing can be more untrue or unjust. The truth is, the New Lights no where met with sterner opposition, nor experienced a greater want of success in making proselytes to their abominable

heresy, than in the bounds of Cumberland Presbyterian operations. The pastors of churches and itinerants on their circuits made themselves masters of the subject in controversy, and prepared themselves manfully "to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." Presbyterians, being stationary, had not the same kind of advantages for combating this error in the pulpit, but by their pens, and from the press, they rendered signal service to the cause of truth. By all other denominations in the west at that time, this heresy was regarded as truly ridiculous as dangerous. When men with the Bible in their hands, argued that Jesus Christ possessed only a super-angelic nature and a delegated power, their doctrine seemed to destroy the foundation of the Christian's hope, deny the Lord that bought them, and assert infidelity in disguise.

For a number of years Mr. Ewing stood as a strong tower in opposition to this doctrine. His concern for souls, and zeal for the truth, would not allow him to be silent while, to use his own language, "damning heresy stalked abroad." He preached by invitation in many places on the subject, and his vigorous intellect and powerful arguments failed not of abundant success. Hopkinsville, the county seat of Christian, and its vicinity, were regarded for a number of years as the stronghold of this sect, having there a respectable house of worship, and one of the strongest men in the whole connection for their preacher. Different denominations called forth to their aid their ablest ministers. Mr. Ewing, among others, obeyed the

call; and Mr. John Finley says that his mind was so absorbed by his subject, and impressed with the importance of his undertaking, that his face seemed to shine like an angel's; that his discourses were indeed the most lucid and irresistible of any he heard. This was probably in the year 1816, but the exact year is not ascertained. At the present time scarce an individual can be found at that place still adhering to this sect.

The subject of the Arian heresy is frequently alluded to in his correspondence, and he manifests great abhorrence of a doctrine so dishonoring to God, and dangerous to the souls of men. In a letter to Rev. William Harris, dated December 29, 1818, is found the following :

"It is late at night, and I have time to answer but very briefly to your inquiry about my late contest with 'the great Arian.' I must refer you to brothers Reuben and Chatham, who can give you the information you desire. I will just say, however, that in answer to the prayers of God's people, and, no doubt, your own, I was favored with special, precious, and sensible aid from on high. Yes, my brother, most assuredly God did help me to vindicate his own precious truth. In this I cannot be mistaken, Let the eternal honor be his alone. I have no doubt but much good was done. I trust and believe I was enabled, through assisting grace, to raise a barrier that will keep all good people, and all who are well-disposed towards religion, from being carried away by this damning heresy."

In the winter of 1818 and '19, occurred the great awakening in Russelville, through the visible instrumentality of the labors of Rev. Finis Ewing and Rev. Wm. Barnett, in that town. Having understood that Mr. Ewing had given a circumstantial account of this work

of grace, in a letter to Rev. R. Donnell, we were more anxious to present this than any other of the letters which have come into our hands, to our readers. Our disappointment is great, however, in finding this letter missing. In the letters we have, the fact is barely alluded to. From Rev. David Lowry, of Lebanon, Mrs. Sally Hamilton, of Nashville, and others, certain facts have been obtained which will in some degree, supply the deficiency. The preceding and accompanying circumstances as well as the work itself are truly interesting.

Rev. Wm. Barnett, as all who ever heard him will testify, was a son of thunder, a Boanerges, in his exhibitions of divine truth. He turned his attention to the gospel ministry, early in life, but being unable to obtain a classical education, he supplied the want of it by diligence and study, and became a very popular and powerful preacher. Being in Nashville on a certain occasion, he was invited by Rev. Dr. Blackburn to preach. He delivered a discourse, with his usual power and pungency. Perhaps he was rather too plain and pointed on the universality of the atonement, the freedom of man's will, the fullness of the great salvation and the offers of mercy to all who were in their sins, to please his brother minister. It must be remembered that the old Presbyterians had not yet adopted the Cumberland Presbyterian manner of presenting these precious doctrines in their sermons, nor had revivals yet begun to be known among them in this country. Mr. Barnett was a tolerably good specimen of the promoters of the revival of 1800; and his were the very doctrines which had so displeased

the Old Side brethren, and for which his fathers in the ministry had suffered their censures. He doubtless knew all this ; but could preach nothing but what he believed to be the truth.

Dr. Blackburn seemed dissatisfied ; and in his exhortation after the sermon, took occasion gravely to inform his hearers that “ noise and nonsense never could convert any body ; for if they could, thunder would have converted all long ago.” This was understood as a reproof or slur upon Mr. Barnett’s preaching. He felt it deeply, and was much embarrassed and mortified. Being very young, this uncalled for rebuke so greatly discouraged him, that it was with great difficulty he could be prevailed on to preach or exhort, for some time afterwards.*

On their way to Russelville to hold the meeting before mentioned, Mr. Ewing told his brother Barnett that he would expect him, as was usual in those days, to follow the sermon with exhortation. The latter would not consent, but, after much argument and persuasion, utterly refused. Upon this Mr. Ewing, with much warmth, replied, “ then I believe the Lord will curse

* Some years after this, Mr. Barnett having gained experience, met Dr. Blackburn, who, in his sermon talked about the ruin, misery, &c., which awaited the finally impenitent. In the course of his exhortation, Barnett took occasion to warn the impenitent thus : “ If you do not repent, you will go to that place which was *hinted at* just now. But I must tell you what it is. It is hell ! It is a lake that burns with fire and brimstone ! It is to endure the wrath of a holy God ! It is to feel forever the gnawings of that worm which never dies ! Escape for your lives. Come to the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone can help you.”

you for neglect of duty. For I have been for some time impressed, and even now verily believe, that he is about to commence a great and good work of grace among the people of that wicked place."

And indeed Russelville was a wicked place. For some time after its settlement, it was in a great measure destitute of the preaching of the word. Afterwards, Rev. Valentine Cook and some others had labored there, weeping and praying over its desolation. The people seemed devoted to the world, its pursuits and amusements; and some pious hearts feared they were incorrigibly joined to their idols. When the Cumberland Presbyterian congregation at Moriah, a few miles from Russelville, were making their arrangements for holding a camp meeting, Mr. Cook said to Mr. Harris, "you can never do any good there: it is too near the devil's camp ground"—meaning Russelville.

The meeting commenced in a large ball-room belonging to Capt. James Hunter. There was no church in the place; and when meetings were held there, they must necessarily be held in private houses or the courthouse. Mr. Ewing took a position to be heard by the assembly. Mr. Barnett adhering to his resolution, was not with him but at a distance in the congregation. The former delivered one of his most powerful, heart-searching sermons, under which the people became greatly excited, some of them exceedingly alarmed. The latter forgetting Blackburn's reproof, and being filled with concern for the awful condition of perishing sinners, was by Ewing's side when the sermon ended. He exhorted and

called upon those who desired an interest in Christ to distinguish themselves as seekers of religion. "The people," says Mrs. Hamilton, "came, rushing in crowds to the altar of prayer, myself among the others. I felt myself a lost and ruined sinner. I doubt not the others felt the same. The meeting was protracted; and a powerful revival commenced. Many found the Lord precious to their souls. It was an entire new chapter in the history of Russelville; and from that time religion was prosperous and flourishing. Other denominations entered into the work. All seemed united in brotherly love for a time. There were very many professions. How many it is impossible to tell. Long after, when the question was asked, who professed in this revival? The general answer was, almost every body."

Of the converts, several afterwards became eminent ministers of the gospel; while others were distinguished for their usefulness in the various departments of active life. The work was great, and the changes it made were truly wonderful. It has often been said that it left but few unblessed, who came within its influence. The Cumberland Presbyterians soon organized Bible, tract, and missionary societies in the place. The female members particularly became much interested in the cause of missions. Mrs. Hamilton herself, on one occasion, became so much interested for the poor heathen, that she took off all her jewelry, consisting of breastpins, bracelets, ear-rings, and finger-rings, and gave them to Rev. Mr. Goodell, missionary to Palestine.

Mr. Barnett has been heard to say that he had never been delivered from the embarrassing and discouraging effects of Blackburn's reproof, until this meeting. And Mr. Ewing has been heard to say that, on his way to Russelville, he was so fully impressed with the idea that the Lord was about to visit the place in mercy, his mind scarcely admitted a doubt.

Mrs. Hamilton still lives with an only daughter at Nashville, is a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, and eminent for her piety. She remembers with tender interest, her spiritual father and other early advocates of a free salvation. She loves to talk of revivals, camp meetings, missionary operations, the comforts of religion, the Christian warfare and her prospects of a bright inheritance beyond this vale of tears. In the conclusion of this chapter, a space may be filled with a brief notice of her excellent husband, long deceased.

Joseph Davis Hamilton, Esq., was a graduate of Transylvania University, for some years associated with Dr. Joshua L. Wilson in a classical school, at Bardstown, afterwards principal of the Russelville Academy, and still later cashier of the old State bank. He professed religion at Cane ridge, at the age of seventeen; but was not satisfied that he ought to join the church, until after he obtained a brighter manifestation of the pardon of his sins, during the progress of the revival above noticed. He and his wife then united with the church. As a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian, he stood deservedly high in the estimation of all who

knew him. As an elder in the church, he was frequently a member of her different judicatures ; and his efficient services and wise counsels were highly appreciated. He lived beloved by his brethren, esteemed by his neighbors, honored by his fellow-citizens ; and died lamented by all.

CHAPTER XX.

CORRESPONDENCE PREVIOUS TO REMOVAL.

Lebanon congregation — Wise Providence — Contemplates a removal — Letter to R. Donnell — Doubtful state of mind — Missouri — Good work in Russelville — Letter to R. Donnell — Missionary spirit — Labors — Prayer a medicine — Address to the people of Missouri — Letter to R. Donnell — Camp meeting — Presbytery — Pilot Knob — Resignation of the office of Post master.

THE spirit of emigration to the new territories has already been noticed. From Mr. Ewing's immediate neighborhood, removals were more numerous and frequent than from most others; and about this time it seemed highly probable that the Lebanon congregation, once so large and flourishing, would become almost, if not entirely, extinct. The emigrants, principally from Virginia, had been accustomed to the cultivation of tobacco, and were induced to purchase farms there, on account of the fertility of the soil, and its adaptation to the growth of that plant. In the general they were not very favorable to religion, more especially the doctrines and practices of the Pede-baptist denominations.

Here we may pause to admire the wisdom and goodness of an all-wise and merciful providence. The great Head of the church saw an extensive field of usefulness opening in Missouri, already whitening for the harvest and greatly needing the labors of the husbandmen; and by his grace and goodness so arranged circumstances

and overruled events as to induce Mr. Ewing and his congregation to enter in and become his harvesters. This was not the first time that the church was extended, her borders enlarged, the gospel more widely diffused, and greater numbers saved by the dispersion of the disciples. But boundless love did not stop here. The emigrants from Virginia must also be provided with the means of grace and salvation. Hence certain pious and excellent ministers, against whose doctrines and mode of administering one of the ordinances no peculiar prejudice existed, were sent among them, as chosen vessels of the Lord, also to win them from their idols and teach them the way of life. And to the honor of him who delighteth not in the death of the wicked, it may be stated as an encouraging and soul-cheering fact that, while many of these new emigrants became hopefully converted, the pastor and the people of the Lebanon congregation were enabled to erect the standard of the cross in almost all parts of Missouri; and many flourishing congregations, seven Presbyteries, one whole Synod and part of another, are monuments of the wise providence of Jehovah.

Mr. Ewing, though his labors were sought for by several congregations, and his ministering brethren in that part of the country were much opposed to his leaving them, thought he saw in these things, the indications of God's providence; and began to think seriously of a removal. But to what place, he could not at first determine. Accustomed as he was to take counsel of him who giveth wisdom, his petitions were

frequent and fervent that the divine will might be made known to him. The two following letters make some allusion to this interesting inquiry :

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, March 23, 1819.

MY DEAR BROTHER:—My apology for not sooner answering your two interesting letters is the state of my mind, which is by no means tranquil. It appears that the Lord intends that there shall not continue to be a Cumberland Presbyterian congregation in Lebanon! Already about one half have removed; and nineteen more of the members have determined to remove in a few months. Nearly all the balance will follow as soon as they can sell their property. And yet I am not conscious that it is in his wrath, that God is permitting this congregation to break up. It may be best for the general cause. But I assure you, my mind has been, and is in great trouble and confusion on the subject. Should I live, it appears that a removal is inevitable; but I do not know where. If I know my heart, I desire to go where I can be the most useful. At present Missouri appears the most promising. But the thought of going so far from my beloved friends in the ministry, &c., is exceedingly painful. I think tobacco makers and Baptists will take this part of the country. Though I would not speak disparagingly, I have no particular partiality for either, beyond others. I have occasionally turned my mind to Cane Creek; but my children and most of my congregation are tending to the west. You cannot imagine the confusion and conflicts of my mind on this subject. I have tried to cry to God to be enabled to stay my mind on him, and do present duty. My inclination would be, and is, to stay my whole life-time where I am; but religious society is under God my life in this world. If God permit, I must have it, while I tabernacle here below.

The good work is still going on in Russelville; but the cry of water has done much mischief there. We have appointed a communion there, on the third Sabbath in next month. I would be much pleased to meet you there at that time. I rejoice at what you tell me of brothers King and Moore. Surely the Lord is about to do marvelous works in all the earth. * * * * *

Accept assurances of brotherly affection, FINIS EWING.

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, May 17, 1819.

MY DEAR BROTHER: * * * * * It rejoices me to hear that the blessed missionary spirit has taken so strong hold of the hearts of ministers and the people, both male and female, in your country. The liberality of females in this country has enabled us to send a precious Missionary to the upper settlements in the Boone's Lick country, Missouri; and a considerable surplus will be left in their treasury.

We licensed no preachers at our last Presbytery. We have many candidates; several of whom will probably be licensed at our next. The calls for ministerial labor from the west are really affecting to a godly heart. O Lord, send more laborers.

* * * * *

It still seems as if God determines that there shall not continue to be a Cumberland Presbyterian congregation in this immediate neighborhood. I see a removal inevitable; but *where*, I am not certain. My mind still preponderates towards the west.

MAY 25th.

After an interval of eight days, I proceed with my letter. Since I commenced, Mrs. Ewing has been very sick, having been delivered of a fine son on the 16th. Shortly after, she took cold; and we had some apprehensions for her life. That medicine which has never heretofore failed me, was resorted to again; and under God, I think, has been useful, for she is now recovering and seems quite cheerful. As the medicine may be useful in your part of the country likewise, I will name it: it is frequent and fervent *prayer*. Doubtless you yourself are well acquainted with it, and have often proved its efficacy. It is worthy of being recommended to all others.

I am pleased to hear that brother King is coming to visit us, and pray that the Lord may come with him. Present my thanks to brother Erwin for the interesting and affectionate letter with which he honored me, not long since. When I get a little leisure, I intend to answer it. In the meantime I would observe, that as yet Providence does not seem to my apprehension to point my way to the south. Although on account of the society of ministers and people, there are strong inducements and numerous attachments to lead me in that direction; yet in trying to know the mind of the Lord,

we ought always to be jealous of ourselves and our inclinations. One thing gives me comfort: let me move where I may, I expect ere long to enjoy the uninterrupted society of my dear fellow laborers in the gospel and all my dear Christian acquaintances, in a world of light and love. This is indeed a blessed prospect. I have been called on to go this evening and marry Miss Lucretia Benham to a very decent and pious young man, Mr. Hervey Young.

* * * * *

Yours as ever,

FINIS EWING.

A female missionary society, which had been organized under the auspices of Mr. Ewing, resolved to send a Missionary to Missouri, to itinerate through the destitute places of that territory, preaching and administering the ordinances.

Their choice fell upon an excellent young man, then comparatively unknown, but who has since distinguished himself by his efficient and useful labors. He was no other than Rev. Robert D. Morrow, D. D., President of Chapel Hill College, Mo.

In order to increase the fund for his support, facilitate his labors and usefulness, Mr. Ewing issued the following address:

To the People of the Missouri Territory.

DEAR FRIENDS AND BRETHREN:—The Missionary Board for Western Missions of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, having been for some time deeply impressed with your comparative destitute situation, as it respects the word and ordinances of God's house, have appointed our beloved and faithful friend and brother, Rev. Robert D. Morrow, to ride and spend several months among you as a missionary, to preach the gospel of peace, and administer the holy ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. We trust you will give him all the countenance and attention that his situation requires. If

our funds were not so limited, we would gladly send you more than one missionary, and for a longer period than several months. But as every cent which is collected for our missionary fund, is conscientiously applied, and will be applied to and for the purpose of sending missionaries to the frontiers and the destitute, we trust you will at once see the necessity of making such contributions to our missionary as your circumstances will consistently admit, more especially as the *first* missionary ever employed by this Board has been and is sent to you. It would have been more pleasant to us not to have hinted this part of the subject, did not the situation of our funds, and a desire to be more extensively useful, require it.

Dear friends and brethren, with exertions, prayers, and anxieties, the Board, under God, has succeeded in sending you a faithful, tried missionary of the glorious gospel. O ! receive the word at his mouth ; receive him as a messenger from God ! do not suffer the present privilege to pass by unimproved. Think of the thousands that are perishing for the lack of knowledge — think of the goodness of God in sending his word to *you* — view it as coming from *his* kind providence and unmerited grace — let his goodness subdue you — let his love beget love in you — take encouragement from the present dispensation of his grace to wrestle hard with him for a glorious effusion of his Holy Spirit — look for salvation for yourselves and for your households, and for your neighbors. Many prayers follow your missionary to his place of destination — let many more prayers hold up his hands after he arrives among you. O ! are not the souls of the people of Missouri as precious as they are elsewhere ? Is not God willing to save and comfort them ?

May God our Saviour, bless you and yours, with the exceeding riches of his abundant grace. Amen.

By order of the Board,

May 2d, 1819.

FINIS EWING, Clerk.

The following letter will exhibit the condition of the Logan Presbytery at the time, and would be worthy of insertion on that account, if no other. It will remind some of their early history, and teach others not to despise the day of small things:

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, Nov. 29, 1819.

MY DEAR BROTHER ROBERT:— * * * * At a camp meeting in Logan county God has displayed his glorious power in the hopeful conversion of twenty-two souls, among whom was a son of brother Harris. We had also an exceedingly interesting session of Presbytery. We licensed five new preachers, and received four new candidates. Of all we have good expectations. Our Stated Clerk was received as a candidate. He is modest and diffident, but a learned and worthy man; but I am not convinced that he will be a more useful preacher than some who are less polished. It may be satisfactory to you to know the names of the young men under the care of this Presbytery. I give them as follows: the licentiates are Lewis, McCorkle, McChord, Porter, Lowry, Shelby, Hamilton, Henry, Johnson, Berry, Long and McDowell. The candidates are Buie, Hunter, Downey, Campbell, Masson, McDaniel and Barnett. The whole make twenty, exclusive of the ordained ministers. Is not God good? Yet I feel to cry to him to send more laborers. But I feel to add to my prayer on that subject what I have not been in the habit of doing heretofore; that is, to entreat the Lord when he *calls*, to give the Presbytery wisdom to *discern*; for I do assure you I was much perplexed with regard to the cases of one or two who offered themselves at our late session but whom we did not receive. The Presbytery have passed an order for the ordination of Messrs. Porter, Lowry, and Shelby. The order is on condition that they stand their examinations on the branches required by discipline, &c. They will spend the whole winter in study and preparation; and there is no reason to apprehend that they will fail of being prepared.

Brother Morrow, the missionary, brings good tidings from the west. By order of the Board I have just finished a circular letter to the female societies in this country. * * * * *

Yours in the gospel,

FINIS EWING.

Mr. Ewing, in another letter to Rev. R. Donnell, expresses himself thus: "I am quite unwell, but must keep you in remembrance that I feel to live and die with you. You seem to be in a strait, and look this way and

that way for human help. I sympathize with you, but cannot help you much, except by my ardent desires and feeble prayers. There is more work to do in this country than we are all able to perform. Our borders are so enlarged that many of the interior parts are in a great measure destitute. A missionary spirit virtually cries, push out! Go forward! Seek out the destitute! Carry the glad tidings to every creature! Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season! Lord, send more able and faithful ministers of the New Testament. I cannot be with you at Nashville at either of the times you request. I wish I could. My whole time is occupied in this region of country.” * * * *

“We have had and will have more camp meetings this season than any one before since we were a Presbytery. Except in one instance, God has remarkably owned and blessed them. Including the last Sabbath, we held one at Pilot Knob. Fencing and serving the first table, I spoke more than three hours. Prejudices seemed to be slain. God worked abundantly. Fifteen professed religion; and many were pricked to the heart.”

The following is the last letter in our possession, written by Mr. Ewing, previous to his removal:

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

EWINGSVILLE, February 4th, 1820.

MY BELOVED BROTHER DONNELL: * * * I am pleased with your very just and profitable reflections on the depression of our monied interests. “Treasure in Heaven,” rightly viewed and duly estimated, will always keep us from being too much depressed under temporal loss and too much elated with temporal prosperity.

I design this evening to send on my resignation, as postmaster, to take effect the last of March; at which time there will be no more Ewingsville, in this country. I am led to this course on account of my anticipated removal in the spring. Yes, the die is cast. If God will, I expect assuredly to start with my family to Missouri. I trust I will not in this act resist or counteract the will of my divine Master. Therefore, pray for me and mine. If God spares us, I hope we may meet at some Synods. In the meantime, write to me here before I leave; and then direct your letters to Booneville, Cooper county, Missouri Territory. For although I may not be postmaster in that county, I will always gladly pay postage on your letters. I feel that the greater distance will not decrease, but rather increase my attachment.

Give my love to sister Donnell. Tell her, if I never see her again in this life, I want to recognize her in that pure world where there is no sickness nor sorrow.

Your unworthy but immutable friend and brother,

FINIS EWING.

CHAPTER XXI.

REMOVAL AND RESIDENCE IN MISSOURI.

Bonds uniting a pastor to his people — Why sundered — Universal regret — Farewell discourses — At Russelville — At Salubrious Spring — Mrs. Young's description — Settles in Cooper county — New Lebanon — Letter to R. Donnell — Report of Synod — Growth in ten years — Deceitfulness of the heart — God alone can keep it — Lectures on divinity — Appointed postmaster — Temperance address — A published sermon — The colonization enterprise — Servants emancipated — Benevolent societies — Reply to a Unitarian — Removal to Lafayette — Elder David Kirkpatrick — Baptist controversy.

OF the ties which bind one human heart to another, scarce any can be freer from the alloy of selfishness than the bonds of Christian union. If any thing can add strength and purity to these bonds, it is that relation of a pastor to his people, which has been entered into and preserved according to the true principles and motives of the gospel. The Apostle, speaking of himself and his fellow ministers, tells the Thessalonians, "we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."* And he thus bears testimony to the affection of the Galatians for him. "Ye received me as an angel of God, even as Jesus Christ. I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have

* 1 Thess. ii, 7-8.

plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." * But if he who bears such testimony found it necessary to sunder ties so sweet, that the word of God might have free course and be glorified, so also did Mr. Ewing, from a similar motive.

It is true that nearly all his congregation, to whom he had long devoted half of his time, had gone or were preparing to go to the west. But there were a number of other congregations in the vicinity who had usually shared the other half of his time, except during the camp meeting season, when to the latter his labors were specially devoted. The calls for labor and scarcity of ministers at the time, rendered these arrangements in some degree necessary; and he was a very laborious minister. Hence the last named congregations were as reluctant to part with him, as if he had actually been their pastor. And though the number of ministers was rapidly increasing, and there could be no fear of actual destitution, yet none could supply his place in the affections of the people and the church generally. For though they might have ten thousand instructors in Christ they had not many fathers; and no other could so emphatically say, "in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel." † Hence in anticipation of his removal to Missouri, there were universal sorrow and regret throughout the bounds of the church. The only consolation was that, by this measure, the gospel might be more widely diffused, and perhaps many more souls saved.

* Gal. iv, 14--15.

† 1 Cor. iv, 15

Previous to his départure, Mr. Ewing visited many of the congregations in Christian and the adjoining counties, preaching to each a farewell sermon. The people attended in immense numbers. Even those whose prejudices had not allowed them much to attend on his ministrations before, were now present; they seemed for the first time to have discovered the value of his piety, intellect, and eloquence; and joined in the universal expressions of regret at his intended removal. At Russelville, where he had frequently preached for several years, and where the wonderful revival already noticed, had brought so many into the fold of Christ, there had been some controversy stirred up, on the subject of baptism. Here the text of his farewell discourse was, "see that ye fall not out by the way." * He may be said to have left the people of that town in tears. At Salubrious Spring, a large congregation, about nine or ten miles from his residence, where he had labored more perhaps than at any other place except at Lebanon, he preached from: "for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." † Mrs. Lucretia Young (the Miss Lucretia Benham of whose marriage to Mr. Harvey Young, he speaks in one of his letters to Mr. Donnell,) a lady remarkable for her piety, intelligence, and warm-heartedness, now deceased, used to give a very glowing description of this sermon and the parting scene; and the mention of the subject always called forth her copious tears. Suffice it to say that, from her description, the parting in this

* Gen. xlv, 24.

† Acts xx, 27.

case must have very strongly resembled that which followed the charge of the Apostle to the elders of Ephesus, in which the text is contained.

“And as they accompanied Paul unto the ship,” so friends and brothers accompanied Mr. Ewing and his family a few miles on their way, when they started for Missouri, in May, 1820. It is not known that any thing of special interest occurred on the journey. He settled in Cooper county; and immediately commenced the work of his Master: for he could more cheerfully dispense with the comforts of life than the labors of the ministry. It was not long before he built up a very large congregation, called New Lebanon. Here he was chiefly instrumental in the erection of a large, commodious house of worship, and a camp ground adjoining. To this congregation he devoted from half to three-fourths of his time — for it is to be remembered that he could not neglect the camp meetings nor refuse to obey calls from other congregations on very special occasions — for about twelve years, or until his removal to Lafayette county.

The following appears to be the second or third letter from his Missouri home to the person to whom it is addressed: those which precede this have not come into our hands:

To Rev. Robert Donnell.

GREEN GROVE, Cooper county, Mo., Nov. 19, 1820.

MY DEAR BROTHER DONNELL: * * * * I have received the printed report of our last Synod penned, I presume, by your hand. At any rate I recognize something of your usual terseness

of composition, as well as your pertinent and very appropriate strokes. I read it to-day to the meeting at New Lebanon. It animated us much. I am ready to exclaim in the language of the Report: "O what hath God wrought! It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." Who would have anticipated, but a few years since, that our little, untaught, scoffed at and despised body would, in the course of ten years have grown into such consistency, respectability, and usefulness? Who would have thought that its congregations of respectable standing would by this time be scattered through or in six States and one or two Territories, whose preachers claim their full share of attention from the learned as well as the unlearned, from the noble as well as the ignoble? It is truly animating to learn that many of Zion's sons are taking her by the hand. I trust out of so many, that this needy and extensive country, so desirous of their labors, will get supplied. They whom God calls to the work will do some good. But let us not be afraid of too many, or indifferent about more; for, be assured, there is room for many, very many more preachers.

I received intelligence by private letter that yourself and several of the brethren preached very acceptably at Synod. This gratifies me, and causes me to feel thankful. But, my dear brother, while I rejoice for all these things, I also am ready to tremble. The human heart is deceitful; and even when it is sound in theory, it is often corrupt in its practice and motives. In a state of prosperity, none but God can keep the heart humble. I have often told you, the day we constituted our first Presbytery, and became a separate body, I dreaded nothing but pride and self-exaltation. I saw clearly that if we, as a body, would continue to be humble and dependent on divine aid, that neither earth nor hell could harm us or prevent our progress. I still see it so. O Lord God, let us all, particularly the ministry, *feel*, even deeply *feel*, the spirit of the conclusion of the Report: "Not unto us," &c.

I think the Lord was with me to-day, having tried to preach on Isaiah li, and first part of 5th verse. All were solemn; and, I trust, many of God's people profited. "Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep." This was my object. We hope for good times in these ends of the earth. We would be much encouraged, if we had more faithful preachers. Can you not, brother, send some able and faithful ones over to help us?

* * * * *

Let me renew my request, that you forthwith undertake the selection of a hymn book, suited to our faith, in which let there be several hymns on the subject and mode of baptism. I could dispose of many of them here. I have not yet had an opportunity to write; but still have it in view. Before I commence, I would wish to see our needy country better supplied with preachers, and a post-office established so that I could conduct correspondence with my brethren, without expense. * * * * *

Accept assurances of my unabated love and esteem,

FINIS EWING.

It was while living at New Lebanon, that Mr. Ewing prepared a course of Lectures on Divinity, principally for the benefit of a class of young men, preparing for the ministry, and residing with him. He gratuitously instructed and supported class after class of candidates, while thus engaged. Of these lectures nothing need be said. They have been widely circulated and duly appreciated. They are in the hands of almost every member of the church, as well as others. It redounds, however, much to the credit of their author, that with a large family and farm, preaching every Sabbath, often during the week, and ever ready to obey the numerous calls which are usually made upon a pastor's time by a large congregation, he should find time to write out such a course of lectures for the instruction of those who were preparing to serve the church, after he had gone to his reward.

Mr. Ewing soon obtained a post-office at his place of residence, named "Ewingsville;" and he received the appointment of postmaster.

He was one whom no good work could escape. Every

enterprise, tending to glorify God and bless mankind, elicited his warmest interest. He was the father of the temperance reformation in central and western Missouri. Even before there had been much said or written on the subject in the far west, he delivered an address to the church, and formed the first society in the church in that State. Throughout the remainder of his life, he seemed to take the liveliest interest in this cause, delivered a great many addresses on the subject, and never failed to make deep and lasting impressions on the minds of his audience. His style of speaking on this subject, as well as all others, was plain and practical, but very rigorous and compact. Those who are acquainted with the logical character of his mind and his systematic method of treating every subject he touched—that he could not speak without ideas and arguments the most ingeniously arranged to fasten conviction on those who heard him—will conclude these addresses were truly worth hearing. They are said by some to have been among the best intellectual efforts of his life, and are believed to have accomplished much for the cause of temperance.

At what time Mr. Ewing's mind began to be exercised on the subject of holding property in slaves, of their education, treatment, &c., it is not exactly known. While at New Lebanon, it is believed, he first preached his much admired sermon on "THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH," which a few years after was published in "THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN PULPIT," and still later, re-published in "THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTE-

RIAN." In speaking of the evils which ought to be put away from the church, his views are expressed on this subject as in the note below.* Most heartily did he approve the colonization enterprise; though there was no society organized in that State prior to his death. As a master, he is known to have been kind and indulgent. He felt and manifested great concern for the moral elevation and spiritual welfare of his servants.

* But, where shall we begin? O! is it indeed true that in this enlightened age, there are so many palpable evils in the church that it is difficult to know where to commence enumerating them? The first evil which I will mention is a *traffic in human flesh and human souls!* It is true, that many professors of religion, and I fear some of my Cumberland brethren, do not scruple to *sell for life* their fellow beings, some of whom are their brethren in the Lord. And what is worse, they are not scrupulous to whom they sell, provided they can obtain a better price! Sometimes husbands and wives, parents and children are thus separated, and I doubt not their cries reach the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

(Lest some of my readers should say, "physician heal thyself," I think it proper to state in this place, that after a *long, painful*, and prayerful investigation of this subject, I have determined *not to hold, nor to give, nor to sell, nor to buy any slave for life.** Mainly from the influence of that passage of God's word which says, "Masters give unto your servants that which is *just and equal.*")

Others who constitute a part of the visible church *half-feed, half-clothe, and oppress* their servants. Indeed, they seem by their conduct towards them, *not* to consider them *fellow-beings*. And it is to be feared that many of them are taking no pains at all to give their servants religious instruction of any kind, and especially are they making no efforts to teach them or cause them to be taught to read that book which testifies of Jesus. Whilst others permit, perhaps require their servants to work, cook, &c., while the *white* people are praying around the family altar.

* This resolution was formed many years ago.

For many years before his death, he determined to liberate all his slaves; and from that time forth he made exertions to qualify them for freedom. Some of the younger servants were instructed to read; and provision was made for the comfort and support of the older ones. At his death all were emancipated.

He was active and ardent in sustaining all the great benevolent institutions of the day. For many years he was a vice president of the American Tract Society, and was the first man in western Missouri who actively contributed to introduce tracts and form auxiliaries in that part of the State. The first agent who ever came to the country, was entertained at his house, and received his cordial co-operation, not only in personal exertion but substantial aid. He was also an officer of the American Bible Society, assisted in the formation of many local societies, and often spoke and preached on the subject. And while in the land office, he kept a box of Bibles in his office for sale and distribution.

During the period of his residence at New Lebanon, a distinguished Arian, or as these people were now called, Unitarian minister announced through the papers of the State, that on a certain day, he would preach his faith; and that the ministers of other denominations were invited to attend and reply, either then or afterwards. Mr. Ewing, with a great many other ministers, attended and listened to a long and powerful vindication of the preacher's favorite theories. He took copious notes of this sermon; and on its conclusion, at the instance of the other ministers then present, he

announced his determination to reply on a given day, the Lord permitting, and invited the opposing champion to attend. On the appointed day an immense concourse of people were present. His adversary, however, did not appear. He had made it convenient, just before the day arrived, to take a trip to Kentucky. Perhaps he had learned what sort of a man he would have to meet. So it was, he did not attend. However, he employed a distinguished politician and lawyer who resided in the town to take notes of Mr. Ewing's sermon. This gentleman took his seat in a convenient place ; and for some time during the delivery of the discourse, he took a quantity of notes. But after a while he threw down his paper, and seemed wholly absorbed in the powerful and luminous exposure of the fallacies of his favorite dogmas. Mr. Ewing finished ; and the public regarded this as a masterly effort : " probably," says a correspondent, " it was the ablest pulpit effort of his whole life." It is to be regretted that this sermon was never published ; and consequently this, like many others of rare value, is lost to the church. His adversary never attempted a reply ; and not long afterwards he abandoned his old doctrines and embraced a new system scarcely more safe or orthodox.

In 1832, Mr. Ewing removed from New Lebanon, to Lafayette county, and took charge of the brick church congregation, not many miles from Lexington. The reasons for this removal are not known to the writer, further than that it was supposed he could thereby better advance the interests of the church. Some days

after he had announced his intended removal, his senior elder, who was accustomed to sit before the pulpit, give out, and lead in singing the hymn, came to his house to remonstrate in the name of the congregation against his contemplated removal. The venerable elder spake with touching earnestness on the subject, and at length with tears in his eyes prayed him not to leave them. This elder's name is David Kirkpatrick, a man eminent for his piety, zeal, and distinguished usefulness. With such a co-laborer as he is said to have been, a faithful minister could scarcely fail of usefulness. "He is one of the very few men I have ever known," writes a distinguished lawyer of that State, "who, I verily thought, could not be induced to do a wrong act." This elder's son, one of the most talented and promising young ministers in the church, and one of Mr. Ewing's pupils, died in the commencement of a very brilliant career. A Presbyterian minister and a relative has spoken of writing his biography.

About this time the Pedeo-baptist denominations in Missouri were greatly annoyed and provoked by the attacks on their faith and practice, of a distinguished Baptist clergyman, who had lately immigrated to the State. It was deemed necessary by the ministers of the church generally that these attacks should be repelled, and the assailant replied to. Mr. Ewing was called on for this purpose. He has never been known to seek controversy, never to evade it when forced upon him, and never to decline it when the interests of the church demanded the exertion of his argumentative

powers. He therefore undertook the defence of the Pedo-baptists' faith against the assaults of this new adversary, both in public discourses and published pamphlets. The enemy's batteries were silenced ; and not long afterwards, the leader retired from the field, to renew, it is said, the contest in other more promising quarters.

CHAPTER XXII.

MEANS OF USEFULNESS.

Pastor of the church at Lexington — Appointment to the Land Office — Reasons for acceptance — Three visits to Kentucky — Meeting with old friends — Cumberland College established — Speech in favor of a delegated Synod — Speaking and writing — Letter to the author — Fraternal rebuke — Appeal for the endowment of Cumberland College — Writing for the church — The Banner of Peace — Last sermon — Death — His children — Rev. Dr. Morrow's reply to the author.

IN 1836, Mr. Ewing took up his residence in the town of Lexington. This may be regarded in some respects as a new pastoral field. There was no church edifice and but a few members. It was not long, however, before a commodious frame church was erected and a considerable congregation organized; which he served until a short time before his death: it was at that time large and flourishing.* He was decidedly of the opinion that every congregation ought to have its own pastor, when practicable, but when not so, he thought two or more ought to unite for this purpose. As a pastor he was indefatigable in the discharge of all the duties of his office, resolute in the administration of

* For a time after Mr. Ewing's death, the pastoral office was vacant, then for some years under the care of Rev. Dr. Calhoun, formerly a Presbyterian minister who had joined the Cumberland Presbyterians, but is now under the care of Rev. C. A. Davis. An elegant brick edifice has been lately erected, in the new town.

discipline, but mild and conciliatory in dealing with offending or dissatisfied members.

The principal reason for his removal to Lexington was the Land Office, at that place. He had long been the personal and political friend of General Jackson. They had been in habits of correspondence ; and shortly after the election of Jackson to the Presidency, Mr. Ewing received from him the appointment of Register of the Land Office. Politicians at the time were not backward to say that a minister ought to devote himself to the church and not hold office. They did not know perhaps that he never received any compensation for his long and laborious services in the ministry ; that he worked for nothing, and supported himself. This he uniformly did, not because he believed in such a principle, but because at first the church was young and poor, and he was able to support himself. And he continued the practice, because others needed the aid which the church could afford more than he. After devoting the best years of his life to uncompensated labors for the church, with a large family to provide for, and continual demands on his purse for the various benevolent and church enterprises—to all of which he was a liberal contributor—he accepted a lucrative office. But it was an office the duties of which could be in a good degree discharged by an assistant, requiring but little of his personal attention. It did not at all interfere with his higher duties as a minister. And he accepted it, as he often told his family and friends, in order to enable him to afford more aid to the great benevolent

enterprises and charities of the church. He still continued active and useful in the ministry. During the eleven years in which he held this office, he was distinguished for his uprightness and integrity, and rendered entire satisfaction to the Government and generally to those with whom he transacted the business. He resigned in 1841.

Mr. Ewing, after his removal to Missouri, visited the scenes of his early life and labors no less than three times. On all these occasions, it was the privilege of the writer to enjoy more or less of his company and conversation. His first visit was to the Synod at Russelville in 1821 or '22. His second was to the Synod at Princeton, in 1825. His third was to the General Assembly at Princeton, in May 1829. On all these occasions, there was manifested by all classes of people, not only those who had known him personally, but those who had read his writings or had only heard of him by report, a truly remarkable but very natural anxiety to see and hear him preach. He never appeared to notice, perhaps really did not observe, the interest and curiosity awakened by his presence in the minds of the multitude; but when he met with old friends, then there were cordial greetings, grasping of hands, tearful eyes, love's tender accents upon tremulous tongues, and sometimes brotherly embraces. It was evident that he had won many—it might be almost said all—true hearts; while his own was warm enough to cherish, and capacious enough to embrace, all in its best affections, its tenderest sympathies. Well might those veterans

of the cross meet and mingle their tears together. Men said that in their church relations here, they had lived, and loved, and labored, and sacrificed, and suffered together. But the time would soon come when they should triumphantly enter the general assembly and church of the first born; and a more melodious voice should announce, "these are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Two questions of absorbing interest came up for the consideration of the Synod at Princeton in 1825. The first was a proposition for the establishment of a College. Three distinguished gentlemen of the bar had come, one from Russelville and two from Elkton, to advocate the important measure; and they all made very appropriate and eloquent speeches on the occasion. It is true, the members of Synod generally were in favor, and none opposed the contemplated institution; but the importance of the enterprise and its bearings upon the church excited at the time great interest and animation. Mr. Ewing, while he warned against pride, self-confidence and trusting in an arm of flesh, actually made the most lucid and powerful argument in favor of ministerial education, to which the writer has ever listened. The plan proposed was adopted; and the result was the founding of Cumberland College, at Princeton, Ky. He was always one of the warmest friends and most liberal patrons of this institution; and in a letter to Rev. Wm. Harris, now in our possession, he writes thus: "I wrote some time since to the trustees, that I wished the profits,

arising from my Lectures, to be applied to Cumberland College. I hope, Brother William, you will promote that application."

The second great question discussed at this Synod was, whether — since the Church had enlarged her borders and increased her strength, to an extent that would no longer admit of her representatives assembling in one body, and a division into several was now indispensable — the common uniting bond of the highest judicature should be a General Assembly or delegated Synod? Several of the ablest ministers advocated the plan of a General Assembly. Mr. Ewing took the side of a delegated Synod. He dreaded the imitation of other churches, lest the time might come when this Church would imitate others in things not profitable and praise-worthy. He had various other reasons which seemed mainly to grow out of his great aversion to pride and vain glory, and his heart-felt solicitude to preserve the minds of ministers and people in a state of deep humility, always sensible of their dependence on divine aid, for any degree of usefulness.

For depth of information and accurate knowledge of the various forms of civil and ecclesiastical governments, for cogency of argument and power of eloquence, his speech on this subject was not and scarcely could be excelled. But the writer will not hazard an analysis or description of it, lest he should do it injustice. Had a stenographer been present to write down every word and sentence, something would have been gained; but even he would have failed to preserve the tones, the

gestures, and the workings of that ever varying but expressive countenance ; all which told almost as happily and effectively as the language itself. Had Mr. Ewing himself, at its close, seated himself at his desk, and written out that speech, he would probably have made it even less excellent and admirable than the stenographer would have done ; he would have made it respectable indeed ; but it would have been like his Lectures and other writings, falling far below the logical power and brilliant success of Father Ewing's extemporaneous efforts. We mean not to disparage his Lectures or any of his writings. We value them as a legacy to the church. But we mean simply to say, that, though they would discredit no man, they are but meagre representations of his own logical power and fervid eloquence in speaking. This is easily accounted for. Like some of the most distinguished for bar eloquence, who scarcely write at all, he had trained his mind to speak *extempore* ; and in the slow and toilsome process of committing his thoughts to paper, they lost very much of their power, pathos and lucid arrangement. Men who have trained and accustomed themselves to dive at once to the very bottom of their subject, comprehending at a glance its strong points and weak places, the arguments to be employed and the objections to be anticipated, are often surpassed in writing by those who are not more profound thinkers, but whose mental operations are slower and consequently more patient in polishing. The characteristic of the one is strength, that of the other accuracy.

The writer held occasional correspondence with Mr.

Ewing, almost from their first acquaintance, in 1821. A few extracts will be given from letters received in 1840. At that time, Cumberland College, in the presidency of which the author had then served for about fifteen years, becoming embarrassed in its finances, he wrote, published and circulated through the church a pamphlet, appealing for a permanent endowment. Certain remarks, respecting the fathers and founders of the church, were understood by Mr. Ewing to imply that they, himself included, had not been sufficiently liberal in sustaining the institution. Nothing of this kind was intended, for his liberality was well known; and this very fact rendered his construction of the remarks the more wounding to his feelings. Did he withdraw his aid and patronage from a College whose President he supposed, could do him so great injustice? This is what many men would have done. But Mr. Ewing, after a fraternal rebuke, immediately commenced a plan for relieving the College and raising a permanent endowing fund. This will appear in the following letter:

To Rev. F. R. Cossitt, D. D.

LEXINGTON, Mo., March 2, 1840.

DEAR BROTHER:—Your letter and pamphlet came to hand last night. On reading them, I was afflicted in my soul. Sleep departed from me, and I was utterly at a loss to know what to do. In the first place, I will not disguise the fact, I felt rather displeased at some of your implied censure of myself, where you have spoken so much of the "Fathers and founders of our church," &c. I will not with affected modesty deny the application of both to myself. It always humbles me to be called a father of the church, when I consider the poor progress I have made in knowledge and holiness. Whatever, through grace, I have been enabled to accomplish in behalf of our

beloved branch of God's Zion, is known. Therefore I take your remarks as an indirect but unjust censure on myself. If I may be allowed to speak in my own justification, I will say, if all the fathers and founders and juniors in the ministry alone had done half as much in money and influence, as I have done, the College would not be in jeopardy. My good brother, please to examine the records, ascertain the amount of all I have donated to the College at different times, and of what I have collected from others, and then if you should continue your appeals for Cumberland College, as I hope you will, you will not come down upon me — I am sure you will not, when you know the whole truth — with so great severity. Now, brother, I have emptied my budget, and am prepared for other matters.

You inquire, “if I would not be willing to write something on the subject of the College, and publish in the paper?” What paper? You do not mean, I presume, that little matter gotten up at Springfield. I can write nothing for that, nor think of it without unpleasant feelings. And brother Donnell writes that the Convention's paper will not be issued till after the General Assembly. This grieves me. I am old and in some respects infirm. I therefore feel reluctant to write for the public press; but I do wish to say some things about the College, especially if I could have weight with the brethren. I have ever been the fast friend of that institution. I have never faltered. And I think with you, it would be an everlasting disgrace and a crying sin to let it pass into other hands for the want of liberality and patronage on the part of our church. Since I received yours, I have thought of writing a circular to the brethren, publishing and sending it through our entire bounds. But we have no press within less than forty miles. Therefore if I do write such a letter, I will send the manuscript to you. You can have it printed at the press in Princeton *at my expense*, and send it where and to whom you please. If it be done at all, it ought to be circulated before the General Assembly. Possibly I may write something to accompany this. My eyes are sore; I have great bodily pain; and must here break off and go to rest.

MARCH 3d.

Sure enough, I picked up courage, and have this day written a sort of circular* to the brethren. I send it to you to examine, correct, alter, &c., or to suppress altogether, just as your better judgment

* This will be found in the Appendix, marked E.

may dictate. I write in too much bodily pain to attempt to transcribe or correct. I cannot think of doing it. But my zeal for the cause has prompted me to attempt what I hope may do some good, and to make offers of aid in increasing the fund which other demands on my purse scarcely justify. But I cannot bear the thought of that institution passing into other hands. * * *

I entreat you to take every liberty in correcting my piece—retaining the sense and sentiments—as if you had originally written it yourself. Have it printed in convenient form to circulate as extensively as possible, throughout the church. And what you do, do quickly, as it is important that it should be read and considered before the General Assembly.

* * * * *

Notwithstanding the rebuke I have given you in this letter, I remain your sincere friend and brother,

In the best of bonds,

FINIS EWING.

To Rev. F. R. Cossitt, D. D.

LEXINGTON, Sept. 2d, 1840.

MY DEAR BROTHER:—Your very kind and deeply interesting letter of the 13th ult. was received a few days since. Did you know me as I know myself, you would not feel that hesitancy or delicacy which you evince in communicating with me on every subject connected with the interests of our beloved Zion. When I think you do me injustice, I have the fortitude to tell you so. I allow you the same privilege. Therefore you should, and I hope you always will, feel at liberty to say just what is in your heart, to speak, without reserve. * * * * *

With regard to your inquiry about my retaining my office, I will say it has been my desire and determination for some time to resign; notwithstanding it will cut off my means of doing as much to promote the interests of the church, in a pecuniary way, as I have heretofore been enabled to do. Having done the business of the office chiefly by clerks, it has not been much in my way, it is true, as it regards my ministerial duties. But in my old age, I wish my mind entirely free from all responsibilities of such a character. Therefore I shall free myself of the office. * * * *

You seem pressing on the subject of my writing for the benefit of

the church : and did I not believe you incapable of sinful flattery, I would be very apt to suspect of it, when you talk of my gifts in investigating and writing. I may have some little talent for investigation, as much as ordinary men ; but I do assure you, my brother, that I do generally regard myself comparatively as quite a clumsy writer. This is no affectation of modesty : it is the plain truth. I never could please myself in writing, nor communicate my thoughts half as forcibly in that way as by speaking. However I am old ; and “experience teacheth knowledge,” and may have taught me some things which a younger man may not have learned. But, my good brother, you do not know the almost constant bodily infirmities under which I labor. As it regards my lungs, stomach, and general strength, they are uncommonly good for a man of my age, especially one who has endured so much labor and hardship. But I am almost constantly afflicted with distressing pains in some part of my mortal frame ; and when they are acute, I cannot be sufficiently composed to think or write. Yet I greatly desire to be somewhat useful, while I live and after I am dead. Therefore I feel every disposition to write, if by that means I can do any good. But what shall I write ? Shall it be in the form of letters on various subjects, addressed to my brother Cossitt ? My good brother, I am not certain but you are bringing yourself into trouble, by urging me so strongly to write. For I feel a strong inclination, if I should be spared and be favored with health to write, to address all my communications to the President of Cumberland College, *without transcribing one of them* — for my infirmities will scarcely admit of that — to be used by the said President in whatever way he may think proper : whether to suppress, or prepare for the press and publish them. Now, my brother, as God may give me some health and some spirit to write, I urge you in your next to propose the subjects on which I should write. What subjects within the grasp of my feeble powers, would be most useful and edifying to the church ? Be explicit, give me plenty ; and then perhaps I will be able to respond to some of them.

* * * * *

As yet I have had no opportunity to do any thing for your excellent monthly, “The Banner of Peace.” So much am I pleased with it, I would be glad it could be published twice a week. I herewith inclose you ten names with the cash for advance payment. I have not even seen these brethren to ask, if they will take the paper ?

But I presume the most or all of them will refund the price to me and after this volume, to you. If not, they will read it. I presume I make the price of postage easier than you do. Therefore I insist on paying all, both ways. You must not object. Write to me on the receipt of this. Kind regard to the good lady.

Truly your brother,

FINIS EWING.

The author, believing that Mr. Ewing had investigated certain theological subjects more critically than any other man in the church, and that his high standing would give his works a wide circulation and cause them to be read, continued to urge and encourage him to write, proposing the subjects, and suggesting that he should commit to paper some facts in regard to his own life and labors to aid some one who, after his decease, might undertake his biography. In a letter not here given, he says: "When I suggested the superior fitness of many other brethren to write on those subjects, I spake candidly and unfeignedly. Your remarks, however, in reply are forcible; and should I be favored with health, I would be willing to do my best." After speaking again of his distressing pains and infirmities, he says, "I am deterred from writing any thing concerning myself, by several considerations. On the one hand, there would be a temptation to conceal or omit my faults, and I have been guilty of many; on the other, a delicacy in telling the whole truth, with regard to the part I have taken in the organization and progress of our branch of the church."

In the last letter received by the author, Mr. Ewing expresses his high approbation of the Banner of Peace, and sends a list of subscriptions which he had obtained

for the endowment of Cumberland College, amounting to eleven hundred and twenty-five dollars.

It is said that Mr. Ewing kept up his habits of study, and continued to improve while he lived. A very intelligent gentleman, who had long known him and been accustomed to hear him preach, was present at his last sermon; and said: "this sermon was truly excellent; and I think it decidedly the best I ever heard from him."

Mr. Ewing departed this life, July 4th, 1841, in his 68th year. His death was calm and peaceful. His hopes were in heaven. He left the world, trusting in the merits of that Saviour whom he loved and whom he served. "Tell me how a man has lived," says a certain writer, "and I can tell you how he died." It might have been desired by many, that a fuller account of the closing scene of his life had been given. But this is not in the power of the biographer. Such doubtless had been his life that he could say with Job: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." And when he looked at the extent and unparalleled success of the Church, which he, with others assisting him, had founded, and the prosperity of his own beloved family, he well might say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

The names of Mr. Ewing's children are the following:

1. Winiford, (wife of Henry Ruby) deceased.
2. Wm. Lee, (Gen. Ewing, late a Senator in Congress from Illinois) deceased.

3. Thompson McGready, (Col. Ewing, several times a representative from Todd county to the Legislature of Kentucky), now of Lafayette county, Missouri.

4. Dovey, who died in infancy.

5. Mary, who died in infancy.

6. Baxter McGee, who died at the age of nineteen, in Cooper county, Missouri.

7. Mary Anderson, who married Archibald Cavanaugh, after whose death, she married Chatham Ewing and lives in Lafayette county, Missouri.

8. Margaret Davidson, the wife of Rev. Robert Sloan, of Independence, Missouri.

9. Pamela Jane, who married Dr. James W. Reed, after whose death, she married Horseley Rea, and resides in Port Lavacca, Texas.

10. Finis Young, of Lexington, Missouri.

11. Washington Perry, of California.

12. Robert Chatham Donnell, Attorney at Law, and late United States Marshall of Missouri.

13. Ephraim Barnett, of Rea county, Attorney at Law, and Secretary of State for Missouri.

The author having addressed a letter of inquiry to Rev. Robert D. Morrow, D.D., President of Chapel Hill College, Missouri, his reply will conclude this chapter :

“Rev. Finis Ewing’s piety was of the deepest character. I have not been acquainted with any person who gave evidence that his piety was of a purer, or more scriptural kind. He was a man of strong faith, unwavering in its character, and rationally fixed on God and his promises. His zeal was according to knowledge,

therefore he was not enthusiastic or wild, carried away with feelings, but pure and fervent. He gave evidence of a great concern for a perishing world ; and especially for his neighbors, who were living without Christ ; this not in word and tongue, but in deed and truth.

As a preacher, he was laborious, bodily and mentally. It was evident, that he considered a minister should be a *laborer* and not a *loiterer*. He attended camp meetings, highly approved of them, was a supporter of them at home, always camping and furnishing food and lodging in a very fair proportion in the congregation wherever he lived. When in attendance he generally preached from three to five times when health would permit. His preaching always gave evidence of a strong, well-informed mind, and generally manifested a heart deeply imbued with the love of God, feeding the lambs and sheep of God ; and bringing conviction to the sinner's heart. Many, no doubt, were converted through his instrumentality, and many churches raised up by his efforts. I have heard him preach from " And ye will not come unto me, that you might have life ;" " Have faith in God ;" " What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?" " He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." His sermons were generally systematic, logical and impressive ; cheering the heart of the Christian and convincing the sinner ; his manner of treating his texts gave evidence that he matured his subjects well, and did not speak at random.

As a pastor, he was faithful to his flock, ready to

minister to their wants, visiting from house to house. His counsels were of a wholesome character, with a happy talent in settling difficulties that occurred among the people of his charge ; having superior knowledge in the nature and happy tact in the administration of discipline. His brethren esteemed him as a man of God, an excellent minister of the Gospel, a wise counsellor, and an affectionate brother in Christ. His neighbors, his friends, and the public generally, viewed him as a talented man, a Christian and worthy minister, well furnished in every respect, to fill the station in which he was, in the providence of God, called to act, as one of the founders of a distinct denomination of Christians. The frequent mention made of him and his preaching by the ministers and brethren at camp-meetings during the summer of his death, (his death occurring in July) was evidence that he was lamented and his loss deeply felt ; and especially at the meeting of the Presbytery in the fall, where there was suitable action taken expressive of the deep regret felt, and great loss sustained in his death.

As a Presbyterian, he was able, persevering, and cautious ; particularly in the reception, licensure, and ordination of young men for the ministry ; desiring always to have a clear evidence of their deep piety and special call to the holy work. I recollect one remark he made to me when I was quite young in the ministry, “a preacher should not only *be* honest, but he should *appear* to be honest.” This has occurred to me in making contracts in worldly matters. A preacher should

never make contracts that he cannot meet; if he do, some person will think him dishonest perhaps, though he is honest in his intentions.

At the time of Father Ewing's removal to Missouri, the Cumberland Presbyterian church was in its infancy in the far west. The first Presbytery ever held in the State convened in Pike county, May, 1820, about the time he with his family crossed the Mississippi river. The Presbytery was composed of the following ministers: Daniel Buie, Green P. Rice, John Carnahan, and Robert D. Morrow. The members of the church then numbered in the whole State about fifty.

In September of the same year, the Presbytery convened at Booneville, Cooper county, when Father Ewing became a member, and three young men were received as candidates for the ministry. During the ensuing year, in addition to circuit preaching, there were several two days' meetings and a few camp meetings held in various parts of the State, in which Father Ewing took a very active part.

The labors of himself and brethren were blessed of heaven, and many were added to the church. The following year there were several congregations organized, circuit-preaching extended, and some six or seven camp meetings held. The work of God was revived, many made profession of religion, and a considerable increase of candidates for the ministry.

The demand for preaching had so increased that some of the most efficient young men were placed on circuits, without formal licensure, to hold meetings and exhort

the people. The number of camp meetings considerably increased, and several new congregations were organized. The next year the demand for ministerial labor had greatly increased, a goodly number of the young brethren were licensed and told by the Presbytery, in the name of Christ, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature ; and they "knowing the terror of the Lord would persuade men," and constrained by the love of Christ, thus judged that if Christ died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died *for all*, that they which should henceforth live should not live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. In all these labors Father Ewing bore a full share.

The demand for preaching still increased. The doctrines preached by the Cumberland Presbyterian ministers were well received, and under God, were made powerful to the awakening and converting of many souls. There were at least sixteen camp meetings held this summer. The success was similar from year to year, so that when the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian church was formed, there was a Synod organized called *Missouri* ; at first including the States of Missouri and Arkansas.

In a short time, however, the increase of ministers was so great that there were Presbyteries sufficient to form a Synod in Arkansas. During every succeeding year God was evidently with the preachers and people, new congregations formed, new Presbyteries organized, until Father Ewing's death. From the time of his arrival in Missouri until his death, the Cumberland

Presbyterian church had increased from a few scattered members to a large number of organized congregations; the ministry has increased more than tenfold, and from one Presbytery which included the States of Missouri and Arkansas, and nearly half of Illinois, to seven Presbyteries in the State of Missouri alone.

Father Ewing was, during all the time, emphatically one of the *laborers*, riding by day and by night in a newly settled part of the world, sometimes swimming creeks on his horse, and at others, having no where to lay his head but on his saddle bags in the open air. The last summer before his death he was more engaged in attending camp meetings, preaching frequently, and often remaining until a late hour in the night conversing with and praying for mourners.

The writer of this sketch of the acts, &c., of a few of the last years of Father Ewing's life, and labors, was an eye witness to the scenes. He generally traveled with him; has seen him plunge into the muddy stream and swim; has slept by his side on the ground by night, our horses tied to a tree, without food, and then ride next morning until twelve o'clock, before breakfast could be had. All these fatigues and privations were borne by the departed Ewing with the firmness and resignation of a Christian minister. Toward the close of his life he frequently told the writer, that he had been wonderfully blessed of God. In addition to the personal enjoyment of religion, he had lived to see the denomination which he had with two other brethren, been the humble instrument in founding, spread almost over the

United States, and taking a very respectable stand in the Christian world.

A few days before his death he told the writer he was willing to depart when it was heaven's will to take him; his mind was perfectly calm; he had no fears as to his destiny beyond the grave; had lived to see all his natural children able to take care of themselves, and many of his sons in the ministry, able to defend the doctrines of the church.

The writer told him there was one thing he regretted, that he (Ewing) had not written a treatise on church government; he said he regretted himself, that he had not written more than he had, but it had always appeared to him, that there was such a demand for preaching, that he had not time; but were it to do again, he believed he would preach less and write more; but said he, 'God will take care of his own church.' "

CHAPTER XXIII.

PRIVATE CHARACTER OF REV. FINIS EWING.

His personal appearance — Family discipline — Social qualities — Private correspondence — Enemies and friends — Instruction of his pupils — Courage — Industry — Temperance and health — Dress — Sports of the chase — Lectures attacked — The dog and the moon — Benevolence — A little book — Anecdote — Bequest to Lexington Presbytery.

THE attentive reader of the preceding pages has become sufficiently acquainted with the public character and services of the subject of this biography, duly to appreciate them. But the public character of some men often affords but a poor criterion, by which to judge of their private lives. Public virtues sometimes command the respect and admiration of mankind; while the private vices of the same individual excite their pity and regret. Hence we are apt to feel that we are not thoroughly acquainted with a man, however often we may have witnessed the exhibition of his best qualities in public; and it is only after we have noticed the unstudied and undisguised development of his principles, manners and habits in the domestic and social circles, that we are sure we know him as he is. The reader may be curious to be better informed respecting Mr. Ewing's private character. The desire is laudable; and justice to both requires a few observations on the subject.

It may be proper, first, to notice his personal appearance. He was six feet in height, and, when young, rather slender but remarkably straight. From middle age to his last illness, he was slightly inclined to corpulency. His complexion was ruddy, and his hair prematurely gray. His figure and deportment evinced remarkable dignity. His air was grave and serious; but his manners were easy and flexible. Seldom, if ever, is the pulpit filled by one whose presence and demeanor are more calculated to inspire his audience with respect and veneration. To describe his countenance would be a vain attempt. The expressiveness of those features, varying according to the thoughts and feelings which gave them their interest and animation, never could be portrayed by the pen or the pencil. Several likenesses have at different times been taken, and have accompanied his works; but none of them bear any strong resemblance to the original. The likeness in this volume, taken by a skillful artist from the best painting extant, falls short of the requisite accuracy. It is probably the best which ever has or ever will be taken. For the man, whose lineaments of face were so much lighted up or shaded down, by the workings of his mind and the feelings of his heart, would always foil the skill of the painter and the engraver; and a correct likeness never could be produced,

In his family discipline, he was very rigid, perhaps more so than would by some be thought advisable. But he remembered the proverb, "train up a child in the

way he should go ; and when he is old he will not depart from it." He required a strict attendance by all the members, both children and servants, as well as any other persons who might be sojourners with him, at family worship, morning and evening. He insisted on the most rigid observance of the Sabbath, and constant attendance at church by all who were able to go. He constantly labored and prayed that every member of his household might become experimentally and practically pious. His instructions, admonitions, and warnings were not spared ; and his efforts were laborious and unceasing. This was a source of constant and deep concern to him, until his last moments.

In the social circle, he was exceedingly agreeable, communicative, and well informed on almost all topics, even those of ordinary conversation. His colloquial powers were of a high order ; and whatever subject he touched, he rendered truly interesting by the playfulness of his humor or the power of his arguments. He was fond of company, particularly that of ministers and religious persons ; and would sit for hours, discussing in a calm and pleasant manner subjects of mutual interest.

His private correspondence must have been remarkably extensive. Besides a constant correspondence with ministers, on the subject of the great interests of the church, he was continually receiving communications from many of the distinguished politicians of the country, which he always answered with promptitude. He received many letters from Gen. Jackson, Mr. Van

Buren, Col. Benton, Senator Linn, and others. He made it a principle to assert and exercise the rights of a freeman and responsible citizen. He believed the right of suffrage an invaluable privilege, and its conscientious exercise an indispensable duty. He has sometimes been censured for the freedom of his conversations on political subjects. It was a maxim with him that every man should understand and do his duty to the Government under which he lived. He was very far removed from intolerance, and never proscribed or censured others for their opposite views.

A man of his characteristics of mind and heart could scarcely fail to meet with some enemies; and the few whom he had the misfortune to offend were rancorous and vindictive. The truth is, his opinions were always expressed with uncommon freedom and fearlessness. He seemed to have no concealments about any thing, and no toleration for a mean principle, a mean act, or a mean man. But on the contrary his friendships were uniform and lasting. His adherence to men who once enlisted his sympathies and gained his friendship was indeed remarkable, sometimes holding on to their defence and support, till their unworthiness became notorious. He had great influence with those to whom he was attached; and his counsels and opinions were deferred to with profound respect by all his younger friends and acquaintances.

In his instructions to his pupils — it must be remembered that he was training them for the ministry — he was an example of faithfulness. The most trivial fault

was observed and reproved with a stern integrity, but with a mild and paternal authority.

He possessed a rare degree of moral and physical courage. Both have been tried in almost every possible way; but a bold defiance was always thrown into the face of all demonstrations of hostility or opposition. His long, active, and conspicuous career exposed him to many assaults, both from bad men and from ministers of other sects; but no one ever discovered his spirit to quail in the most trying emergency. It is said that, in his youth, he was as remarkable for his proneness to anger or a natural irritability of temper, as for his boldness of daring and contempt of danger. If this be true, considering how completely he was under the control of his principles and conscience, he must indeed, as he often said, have been a miracle of grace. It is probably true; and the following remark, which his brother, Chatham Ewing, was often heard to make, would seem to confirm its justness: "I most certainly believe my brother, Finis, to be a true Christian; for I am well assured that nothing but divine grace, and a great deal of grace, could ever control that turbulent spirit of his, and make him as meek and humble as he is."

His personal habits were chiefly remarkable for energy and industry. He addressed himself to the duties before him, with an attention and perseverance that generally led to a speedy accomplishment. He was emphatically a *laboring* man. Idleness to him was a sin. When at home he was constantly employed in reading or writing, or attending to the affairs of his

household. He personally superintended his farming operations, and took great interest in having every thing done with system and neatness. His fields and grounds were laid out with mathematical precision ; and a general order pervaded the whole establishment. He was remarkably temperate in all things, and as a consequence, never in his life had any serious sickness except the short confinement mentioned in one of his letters — until his last illness. With this strict attention to his health and habits he was enabled to pass through a long career of toil and labor, without those premonitions of failure or decay which have early come upon many a minister. He traveled much, generally on horseback ; and could preach a great many sermons in rapid succession, without any sensible exhaustion of strength. In his dress he was always plain but neat : this was one of his laws of order. He sometimes, but very rarely, indulged in the sports of the chase. His early life and service in the Indian war in Tennessee made him familiar with the use of the rifle, and he was a good marksman.

Generally he was above annoyance from small causes ; trifling circumstances rarely ruffled his temper. When his Lectures were first published, they were the object of attacks from a great many of the neighboring ministers, particularly the Methodist circuit-riders. These things were always reported to him ; but he generally replied with some pleasantry. To a communication, informing of some attack upon him, he once replied with the following anecdote : “ A dog was once observed

barking very furiously at a gleam of moon-shine, that passed through an aperture in a dense foliage." It was asked, "and what did the moon do?" "Why," it was answered, "she shone on." His self-possession rarely forsook him; and his patience under persecution was Christian-like and exemplary.

A very pleasing trait in his private character was his systematic benevolence. It will be remembered that he uniformly served his congregations without receiving or desiring any remuneration; also, that he gratuitously clothed, boarded, and instructed candidates for the ministry. Of the emoluments derived from his office, he contributed largely to all the demands that the various enterprises of the church made upon him. He was one of those who religiously believed it to be the sacred duty of a Christian to give liberally of his abundance, to the support and spread of the gospel. He was not ostentatious in his benevolence. No one ever knew the nature and extent of his charitable donations. A little blank book, with various memoranda in his own hand, found among his papers after his death, disclosed some gratifying facts illustrative of his private charities. This little book exhibited his system of giving to a great variety of objects. The widow, the orphan, the poor young preacher, the circuit-rider, the church edifice, perhaps in a neighboring county, all came in for a share of his Christian sympathy and aid. And, until after his death, no one knew, in many instances, of these kindly acts, except the recipients themselves.

On one occasion, a minister from an adjoining county

made him a visit, and communicated his business by relating the following anecdote : “ A certain wagoner had a team of horses that were all *balky* but one, and that was old Dick. Whenever he came to a hard pull in the road, although old Dick was always pulling and doing his duty, he knew the failing of his other horses, and unless old Dick was whipped, his wagon was stopped, sticking fast in the mud. He therefore was laid under the necessity of whipping his faithful old Dick, at all the hard pulls ; and in this way he never stalled. The minister had tried his own congregation, for means to buy land and build a church ; and he had come twenty miles to whip old Dick.” The land was bought, and the church built.

He left a handsome bequest to Lexington Presbytery, the interest to be appropriated to the support of missionaries within its bounds.

Mr. Ewing was emphatically a great, as well as a good man. All who were capable of appreciating his character and qualifications must have regarded him, as one of that class of men — occasionally to be found in all countries, but more numerous in the west perhaps than elsewhere — who are self-disciplined, self-educated, and self-made ; who have an eye, an ear, and a heart for every thing, and derive instruction from whatever falls in their way ; who, regardless of established usages and forestalling the lessons of a master, seem intuitively to grasp and successfully to appropriate whatever is of practical utility in the learning of the schools. Books doubtless did furnish him with wholesome food for thought

and profitable materials for reflection, and must have added much of reasoning and savor to those intellectual resources which his experience and observation of men and things had accumulated. Yet all his knowledge, however acquired, like grain sown in a fruitful soil, seemed to become productive, yielding a plentiful harvest.

But his intellectual strength consisted in his power of logical analysis, his method of close investigation, his array of irresistible arguments, presented in a style of native strength, chaste simplicity, and often of sparkling brilliancy. Nor was he ever known to betray that confusion of ideas which embarrasses some public speakers. In his mind, all was clear and consistent; and in his expositions, all was lucid and satisfactory. He knew no mental indolence. He was ever active in the pursuit of knowledge, especially of those branches which could render him useful to his fellow-men. And every branch of knowledge had with him, not only a safe depository but an assigned department. Unlike the merchant's goods when scattered in confusion over his counters, but like those same precious commodities when arranged in order on their shelves, each in its proper place; his varied and extensive information constituted an available fund, from which he could bring forth truths new and old, as occasion might require.

Had he chosen to serve his country in the profession of arms, who can say that, with his indomitable courage, energy, and perseverance, he would not have reached the eminence of a Jackson, a Taylor, or a Scott? Had

he devoted himself with all his intellectual strength and resources to law and politics, who will deny that he might have vied with a Calhoun, a Clay, or a Webster? But under the providence of God, he chose the humble, self-denying, and self-sacrificing work of the gospel ministry. And the achievements of this profession, though unheralded by fame and overlooked by the proud, will continue to shine with increasing lustre, when the dazzling glories of warriors and statesmen shall have become dimmed by time, and the true distinction between things temporal and things eternal shall be fully recognized.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FUNERAL SERMON.

On the death of Rev. FINIS EWING, delivered before the General Assembly at Owensboro, Kentucky, on the fourth Sabbath in May, 1842, by Rev. HIRAM A. HUNTER, pastor of the church at that place, now of Philadelphia.

He being dead yet speaketh: HEBREWS xl, 4.

THE present state is one in which the affairs of nations, communities, and individuals are liable to continual fluctuations. And the mind needs some principle capable of supporting it under every adverse circumstance that may occur.

Philosophy's aid has been tendered in vain; unassisted reason's light has proved inadequate to impart efficient relief; but revelation's bright and cheering ray, points to a source, whence, in the midst of trouble, the heart may find a solace, which nothing earthly gives, or can destroy.

Is a nation afflicted? Let it give ear to Jehovah's speech: "say ye not a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."

Is an individual agitated in view of personal danger? Let him take heed to the divine admonition: "I, even

I, am he that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the Son of man which shall be made as grass — and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth, and hath feared the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy ? And where is the fury of the oppressor ? ”

Are we, as in the present instance, afflicted for Zion ? Has God taken from us a venerated father of the church ? One who, in by-gone years fed many of us with the sincere “milk of the word,” and as we were able, has fed us “with meat,” who has taught us in knowledge and in understanding.

Is there reason to fear that since his departure, grievous wolves may enter in, among you, not sparing the flock, that even of your own selves some may arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them ? Let us not forget “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” And by faith in him, faith, “which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ;” faith, by which “the elders obtained a good report ;” faith, by which “we understand the worlds were made ;” faith, by which “Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain ;” let us commit our cause to him whose influence guided our fathers in the organization of the church, sustained her in her infancy, defended her in her trials, and has promised his support until her work is done. And of our venerable father, let us remember that, like Abel, “he being dead, yet speaketh.”

In applying this subject, I propose to consider its verification in the case of Rev. Finis Ewing, one of the founders of our church, who taught, as instruction is best imparted.

First, By PRECEPT. The lessons he thus inculcated were drawn from the Bible and are epitomized in the excellent standard of our church, to which we have subscribed in our solemn ordination. Of these, consider,

1. *The Holy Scriptures.*

Their authenticity is manifest from their wonderful preservation, the exact fulfillment of the prophecies with which they abound, the stupendous and indisputable miracles recorded in them, the grand and elevated subjects on which they treat, and especially from the moral influence of their doctrines in the salvation of men.

Their necessity is obvious from the fact, that although nature's light and creation's works, together with the inscrutable providence of the world's Sovereign, may exhibit to some extent, the divine wisdom, goodness, and power, yet they were and are wholly insufficient to reveal his character, to proclaim his will, and to prescribe the manner of his worship. The eternal God, therefore, hath been pleased to communicate to men, all that is requisite to make them wise unto salvation, and by inspiration through them to give us a revelation, which, in the use of appropriate means, in some of its parts, will meet the comprehension of every rational mind, superceding the necessity of another, or additional revelation; all of which, is to be received, believed, and

obeyed, because God hath given it. It is moreover to be regarded as its own interpreter, under the influence which dictated it. It is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and attended by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is a safe directory for the human race, "from world to world, and from life to life."

2. *Of God and the Holy Trinity.*

"He, who, being dead yet speaketh," delighted much to dwell on the perfections of the divine character, the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the unity of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son, three persons of one substance, power and eternity.

He taught the manifest truth, "There is one only living and true God," infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all the perfections of his nature, working all things according to his own will, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, yet most justly executing his judgments, and most clearly evincing that he will in no wise clear the guilty: One Lord Jesus Christ, the only channel of communication between God and men, the only medium of access to the throne of grace; and one Holy Spirit, the only agent by whom a sinner can be brought from darkness to light, or realize a qualification for the enjoyment of heaven.

3. On the subject of decrees, he recognized no secrecy in reference to human salvation. The divine decrees are taught in language not to be misunderstood, in the concise and instructive lesson given the disciples, when the Author of our salvation commissioned them to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

The first decree of Almighty God concerns the character and destiny of the believer, and is this, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*" The second and last concerns the character and destiny of the unbeliever, and is thus expressed, "*He that believeth not shall be damned.*" The decrees of God, therefore, as they are taught in the Bible, secure the salvation of the believer, and the damnation of the finally impenitent and unbelieving.

If God has decreed any thing more he has not revealed it, and what he has not revealed concerning his purpose, we do not, cannot, know; and those whose credulity leads them into conjecture's wide, wild, and endless field, are liable to run into infidelity, or fatality, which is little better, on the one hand, or into universalism on the other.

4. On the subject of God's providence, he taught the doctrine of a general superintendence of divine providence over all creatures, and a special interposition of divine wisdom, goodness, and power over the righteous; and although God often leaves his children to manifold temptations, and the corruptions of their own hearts, it is to chastise them for former sins, to discover to them the hidden corruption and deceitfulness of their own hearts, thereby to humble them, and make them more vigilant against sin, and more constant and confiding in their dependence on him. While, therefore, "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears open to their cry," "the very hairs of their head are all numbered," and they "are of more value than many

sparrows." The Lord therefore keepeth them, and lest any hurt them, he will keep them night and day.

5. In reference to creation, he taught, as is taught in the first chapter of God's revelation to the world. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

In creating all things else, "let it be," was the command, and, "there was," was the result: But in man's creation, he changed his manner, "let us make man," after another model, "let us make man in our image after our likeness," and "in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them," and stepping forth in the image of his Creator, man found himself the youngest child of the universe; but the darling of his Father, the favorite of his God. Thus closes the chapter of the world's creation; and man's existence, and man's authority are the topic of the last period.

But his was a vast dominion. It extended over all that swims in the water, that flies in the air, or walks on the earth. The crown placed on his head had attractions which angels saw, and charms that angels felt. With the smallest reservation in favor of the absolute Sovereign of the universe, he had subjected to his will the whole earth, from Eden's flowery banks to both the poles.

Man, thus dignified and honored, became the most enviable object in all the vast empire of the universe. His fortune was not to make, 'twas only to keep. But, alas! to one so destitute of experience, however exalted, how hard to guard, how difficult to retain possessions thus gratuitously acquired. The prince of darkness

meditated his ruin, and soon, aye too soon, the sad tale is told.

6. By his machinations he fell, and by that act entailed upon himself and his untold posterity, the name, and worse than that, the nature of sinners. From God and Eden he is once cast out, and involves with himself the destinies of a world. That noble being with aspirations befitting a God, rebels against his Maker and exposes himself and his unfortunate race to the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the pains of hell forever. But,

7. Pursuant to the covenant of grace for his recovery, a system is devised, which is at once worthy of the world's Sovereign who devised it, and claims the admiration of the universe that may realize its advantages. To carry out this system, a celestial king is born. Born to reign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. God's equal appeared as the babe of Bethlehem, the eternal Son, as the obedient servant; the mighty God, a child born; the everlasting Father, as a son given; the Prince of Peace, as bearing upon his shoulder, the government whose increase and peace shall have no end, a government whose principles originated in heaven, were exemplified and executed by the Son of God, are attested and applied by the eternal Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ became "the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "He tasted death for every man" and hence "the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world."

He thus purchased pardon for the whole human race, and makes the tender of that pardon on such terms, and under such circumstances, that, "whosoever will, may take the water of life freely" and should any fail of enjoying the advantages of Christ's atonement, it is attributable to his voluntary rejection of it, and hence, the Son of God asserts, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." "I have called, and ye have refused." I have tendered life, but ye have preferred death. I have offered pardon, but ye have chosen condemnation.

Free will and effectual calling were thus taught by him, who, "being dead, yet speaketh." Every call to repentance is from God, every man is the subject of that call, and that is an effectual call, which in the exercise of a man's volition, is yielded to and obeyed; moreover such yielding obedience, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit will lead the anxious penitent to the source whence justification by faith may be obtained, adoption by grace be realized, and sanctification through the truth and spirit of our God be attained. Thus too, that saving grace, which unites to Christ, to which is connected the pardon of sin, communion with God, and the blessedness of eternal life, is secured to him who casts his care on the Son of God.

The subject of this grace now recognizes sin in its true light, and hates it with a perfect hatred. Acting from the principle of grace now, newly planted in his heart, by divine influence, he loves the things he once hated, and hates the things he once loved

That man can merit the divine favor and forgiveness, by his good works or virtues is an old error, which has been widely spread, and frequently presents itself in some new form, however, contradictory of that reasonable declaration of the son of God. “So likewise ye, when ye shall have all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.”

He who works for hire, receives his wages, not through grace of him for whom he labors, but from the obligation of his employer to recompense him; and if we receive pardon from God, (and none can claim it from another source) then our works can contribute nothing to its purchase, they are in no way whatever the meritorious ground of our pardon. And hence our salvation is of grace through faith “in Christ, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.”

To this sentiment is nearly connected the doctrine of adoption; for, “to as many as believed, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to such as believe on his name.” Moreover, the subject of this renewing influence, being made a new creature in Christ Jesus, is, by the sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit, made to sustain the character of the just, whose “light shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” His works are wrought in God, and may be regarded as the fruit and evidence of a true and lively faith, he may be said to “have the end, everlasting life.” And yet, none of these, has he of himself, but wholly from the Spirit of God, whose influence worketh in him to will and do of

his good pleasure. Not depriving him of his agency, but inclining and enabling him to stir up the grace of God, which is in him, and comply with the injunction, "Occupy till I come."

Being thus united to Christ who is the head of the "body, the Church," the member shall not die. But in keeping with Christ's own engagement, "because I live, ye shall live also," he is made a part "of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." "His life is hid with Christ in God," and "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

These are some of the topics on which the noble soul of our deceased Father delighted to dwell. Oh, what pleasing prospects did the doctrine of the saint's final perseverance, by grace, present to his mind, while he contemplated, as many of us have known him to do, the abundant and rich promises of "God's word," (a favorite term with him in speaking of the Bible) securing the blissful blessedness of the true Christian.

But, he taught also,

Second, By EXAMPLE. "By it, he being dead, yet speaketh,"

1. *In a Pious Life.*

What he taught to be every man's duty to God, he endeavored for himself most faithfully and unflinchingly to perform. With full purpose of heart therefore, he repented of his sins, with that repentance of which he never had cause to repent, that repentance which was unto life. With the heart, he believed unto righteousness, in the Lord Jesus Christ; and in an humble pious

life, exhibited, that his faith was of the operation of God, an active, lively principle, which worked by love, purified the heart, and overcame the world. He delighted "in the law of the Lord after the inward man." By a conduct and conversation in perfect accordance with his profession, he adorned the doctrine of the cross, the cause he had espoused, and commanded the respect and veneration of all who knew him.

2. In an ardent, laborious devotion to the gospel ministry. Such were his views respecting the sacred character of this holy function, that as he firmly believed, he faithfully taught that "no man taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God as was Aaron," and nothing but an inward conviction that God required it at his hand, and a multitude of external testimony corroborating therewith, would ever have induced him to enter upon the solemnly responsible work. It was his unshaken belief, and has always been the sentiment of our church, that an uncalled, unsanctified ministry is the greatest curse that could be sent upon the church.

To prepare for this highly responsible office, was no easy task with him. I have heard it from his own mouth, "my nights have shared the labors and anxieties of my days, to acquire what qualifications I have attained, preparatory to the gospel ministry." When he was licensed to preach the gospel as a probationer, it was, on the part of the Presbytery that licensed him, and so of the one that ordained him, under the tacit acknowledgment, at least, of his competency; and his success in the harvest of 1800 attested that the great

Head of the Church sealed his authority to bear the message of salvation to thousands that heard him, and to many that were joyfully converted through his instrumentality.

He was not one of those ministers who served God and the church with that which cost him nothing, but as he labored to qualify himself for the work, so he "studied to make himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

His labors were not entirely confined to any one congregation. He preached as much in the grove, or in the forest, as in the splendid edifice, and was as faithful in declaring the council of God in the thatch-covered barn, as in the velvet-cushioned pulpit of the city church.

In this laborious ministerial toil he assisted in founding the Cumberland Presbyterian church, in which he took no inactive part. Whom the Spirit of God moved to lead in that important step, perhaps is not known; but from personal acquaintance with the actors and circumstances, it is not improbable that, if one was more active than another, he lead the van.

He was a man of liberal sentiment and feeling, and far less ostentatious than most men would have been, under the same circumstances.

His assiduity in prayer, reading the scriptures, and examining the works and writings of other men, eminently qualified him to fill the place to which God in his providence had called him. While, in his opinions on many subjects, he differed from many religionists, he never-

theless had charity to believe they were as honest and candid as himself, and therefore he was always ready to extend the hand of fellowship to all who embraced the essential doctrines of the gospel, and practiced its holy precepts.

On the subject of Christian liberty, and liberty of conscience, he was no latitudinarian, but a philanthropic Christian. He venerated religious worship by whomsoever performed in the spirit of the gospel, and his regard for the holy Sabbath induced him to spend that sanctified portion of his precious time, peculiarly to the service of Almighty God. The unity and spirituality of the Christian church were subjects that occupied much of his thoughts and efforts, and imparted to his soul much delight. He recognized the church of God, as one which, though composed of many members, yet constituted one body in Christ, and of that body Christ is the head.

But to his bereaved family, a large circle of friends, many of whom were relatives, and especially to a beloved church, for whom he had, perhaps, felt more than any other one man. "He being dead yet speaketh,"

3. *In a most triumphant death.*

Leaning on the promises of a kind and indulgent Father, whose grace had sustained him to a good old age, through whose tender mercy the infant church he had assisted to organize, had grown and strengthened until she was fully prepared to maintain her position among the Christian denominations of the New World, he could calmly resign his family to God, his friends

to the guidance of his grace, his church to the glorious Head, his body to the earth as it was, and his spirit to him who gave it. And in view of his past labors and the scene which was now about to close them, he exclaimed, "*The gospel I have preached is now the sheet anchor to my soul.*"

As the Church of God on earth and in heaven is one, and all true Christians here are members of it, there are no exclusive privileges secured to any, but all have an equal right to all; and those who deny such privileges to any, assume an authority above that which is written, and for such assumption be their's the account. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

How sublime, how transporting, and yet how awful will be the scenes of that solemn day. The assembled universe shall stand before the "Judge of quick and dead." The penetrating eye of omniscience will scrutinize the characters and conduct of each, and all the deeds of darkness shall come to the light, nor words, nor even thoughts remain concealed. Who will then wish to review his thoughts, desire to approve his words, or dare to justify his deeds?

Will we contemplate for a moment this thrilling scene, so nearly connected with the world's destiny, and inquire, who presides in this decisive trial? It is he "whom God hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised

him from the dead." It is the Lord Jesus Christ, declared to be God and man, "Emmanuel," "God with us." "For the Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." In the Revelations of St. John the Divine, are delineated the terrible splendor and awful realities of the last day.

The Judge is seated upon a "throne," which may denote that his decisions, sanctioned by the King of kings, will be final and irrevocable. Nor is it without design that the throne is represented as "white," seeing it will exceed the meridian sun in brightness, and never be sullied by the smallest instance of partiality or injustice. It is further represented that "the earth and heavens shall flee from before his face, and no place be found for them." What an awful sense of his majesty and glory is here impressed upon the mind! This guilty globe was once the place of his abode, till its impious inhabitants, with one consent, and with wicked hands, put him to death. But in that day, as though earth were conscious of its own desert, it will flee from his presence, nor will any place be found for such a theatre of sin to exist any longer in so polluted a state; it shall even "be burned up, and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise." The persons to be judged shall embrace the whole human race. Millions at the deluge, and since that time, for varied purposes, have traversed the mighty deep, and found their graves in the ocean's bosom; but at the last day, "the sea shall give them up." Death shall surrender the bodies that have long since mouldered, and the

invisible world shall deliver up the souls that have long abode in bliss or woe. All who have ever lived upon the earth, "great and small," shall stand before the tribunal of the great Judge. Every one shall appear in his own proper body nor shall any be able to withstand the summons, or to elude the search. The king and the beggar, the master and the servant, the parent and the child, the minister and the layman, shall be no otherwise distinguished than as they shall be classed with the righteous or the wicked.

"The books shall then be opened," and these shall serve as grounds of God's procedure. The book of God's law originally inscribed on the hearts of our first parents, and still not wholly effaced from heathen minds, will be the rule of judgment for those who never saw the light of revelation. The book of the gospel, wherein are unfolded the mysteries of redemption, will be the touchstone by which our faith and practice shall be tried. The book of conscience, too, which now omits many things, or misrepresents them, will then give a fairer testimony : for it will then be a perfect transcript of an unerring book that shall then be opened, (viz :) the book of God's remembrance. In this, shall every action, word, and thought be found faithfully recorded, and all our purposes, desires and motives shall have an influence on his decision, to enhance our happiness or augment our wretchedness.

But there is another book particularly mentioned in the word of truth, which shall also be before this Judge. It is the book of life, wherein will be found the names

of all the saints of the Most High God. "And whosoever was not found within the book of life," shall be "cast into the lake of fire."

The execution of the sentence which the Judge shall pronounce will then fill the saints with joy, and sinners with terror. And what account, my brethren, shall we render in that great and terrible day of the Lord? Are we overseers over the flock of God? It is by his own appointment. Will we then be ready to make settlement? Are we stewards? "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Are we such now? Will we be found such then? Are we such men as might be expected in the ministry of the Christian church in the midst of the nineteenth century? When the light of life has shined with so much brilliancy, and the Sun of righteousness has arisen so nigh the zenith of his glory, where the spirit of the gospel is rousing to action the slumbering energies of the Christian world? When the light of truth is wending its way to the darkest dens of ignorance and emitting its cheering rays into the cheerless caverns of blinded heathenism? Is the object of our study, the purpose of our toil, the glory of God in men's salvation? Do we labor for this, as those whose sun will soon go down, as those who must soon give account to God?

My brethren, the work is before us. "The field is the world." The present is the seed time, the harvest is not distant. May we all in the end hear the welcome plaudit, "Well done good and faithful servant, thou

hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." May "the gospel we have preached" be in death, "the sheet anchor to our souls," and may we rest with the faithful in the bosom of God.

CHAPTER XXV.

REMARKS ON DAVIDSON'S HISTORY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KENTUCKY :

OR,

A REVIEW OF HIS CHAPTERS ON THE REVIVAL OF 1800,
ITS EXTRAVAGANCES AND DISORDERS, AND HIS HISTORY
OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIANS.

THE heart in which grace reigns triumphantly, will be disposed to award justice as well to enemies as to friends. But where grace is wanting, or party spirit is in the ascendant, justice is sometimes less regarded than expediency. It is to be regretted that good men, under the influence of sectarian zeal or bigotry, can comprehend with an eagle's glance whatever favors their own cause, but lose sight of much which may go to sustain the cause they would oppose. The validity of Mr. Ewing's licensure and ordination has been questioned and impugned, by a class of men who ought to have been better informed with regard to the true spirit, genius, and usages of Christianity and Presbyterianism. It is certain, that no ecclesiastical censure or prohibition, unless it be according to truth and righteousness, can be of any force whatever. This being admitted, the ordination of Mr. Ewing and others may be triumphantly

vindicated. The task of exposing the errors of men, standing high in their own church, and some of them esteemed generally for their works' sake, is never to be coveted, nor engaged in, without manifest necessity; in justice to the subject of this biography, however, it cannot now be avoided.

The revival of 1800, the organization and progress of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, would seem to have afforded a fruitful theme for the display of logic and learning, by certain Presbyterian writers of the Old School. In the meantime, the Cumberland Presbyterians have been too busy in promoting the revival and combating infidels and errorists, to pay much attention to attacks from that quarter. Under the influence of great filial reverence, and not without a mixture of family pride, they have chosen to put forth their strength and employ their efforts against the common enemy, by every where proclaiming God's word, rather than return the blows inflicted by an inexorable mother. But these blows, incessantly repeated, are becoming more and more violent; and each succeeding combatant, arming himself with the weapons of those who have preceded him, in addition to his own, comes forth, anticipating, perhaps, the greenest laurel and the easiest triumph over those who refused to die, outright, at the bidding of overstrained authority.

The last assailant appears in a "History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky, by Rev. Robert Davidson, D.D., author of an 'Excursion to the Mammoth Cave,' and 'Notice of the Early Settlement

of Kentucky ; ' late President of Transylvania University ; Corresponding member of the Kentucky Historical Society ; Honorary member of the New York Historical Society ; Honorary member of the National Institute, etc." All these literary achievements and honorary appendages are displayed, in capitals, on the title page of the work, which, in the main, is indeed scholar-like and excellent. This, therefore, is a writer worthy of some notice ; and since he discourses like a man of candor, who thinks himself in the right, he shall have it.

This author has devoted about a hundred pages of his book to "the revival of 1800," its "extravagances and disorders," and what he is pleased to call "the Cumberland Presbyterian Schism ;" also a liberal portion to the "New School Schism." We shall leave him, as a writer of church history, in the full enjoyment of all the laurels he may have won — at any rate, until the historians of the two "schisms" shall undertake their inspection and adjustment — but should justice to the subject of this biography require the plucking away of a few sprigs which may have been surreptitiously entwined in the chaplet, none can take it amiss.

Neither the historian nor the biographer manufactures his materials ; but each has the right to use all those which actually exist. Neither can be made accountable for the facts themselves, but each is responsible for the use he makes of them, whether in his reasonings or his inferences. The statement of some facts is pleasant, of others, painful. A candid writer will be inclined to touch upon the former with joy and satisfaction, the

latter with delicacy and tenderness. And it is possible for a writer to be misled to the admittance of fictions for facts; and in that case any inferences deduced therefrom amount to nothing more than figments. This much is necessary to be said by way of apology for the historian in question. He has derived a great part of his materials from the writers who preceded him, some of whom wrote under the influence of prejudice and excitement; others with too little knowledge of the principles by which the Presbyterian church has, from the beginning, sought to be governed. The favorite object and great effort of these writers would appear to have been to lead the world to believe that the Cumberland Presbyterian church is disorderly, and her ministers unconstitutionally ordained. This being their object, some of them have manifested a willingness to sacrifice any man, or stain the character of any minister—even though he belonged to their own church—who may have stood in the way of its accomplishment. Hence charity is not unprovided with some apology for Dr. Davidson, who, relying on the materials furnished to his hand, and reasoning therefrom with his usual ingenuity, has arrived at conclusions equally unsound, and aided in objects equally unworthy. And though the remarks which follow will be directed to his History, without any special reference to his predecessors, it is not because he is to be regarded as equally blame-worthy, but because he has embodied all their materials in a more imposing form than their ingenuity could suffice to do: in short, because he is

the latest, best, and most attractive writer among them. But how is the favorite object of these writers, which this historian has taken much pains to advance, to be successfully accomplished? How is the thing to be done? Or since the deed, when done, is calculated to impair the usefulness of a large body of professing Christians, how is it to be perpetrated? How is the world to be instructed that the Cumberland Presbyterian church is disorderly, and her ministers unconstitutionally ordained? The historian in question, under the guidance of his froward predecessors, has thought proper to resort to four methods, which may be condensed from his work as follows:

I. By his strictures on the official acts of some members of Transylvania Presbytery, who afterwards became the majority of the old Cumberland Presbytery of the Presbyterian church, in regard to their bringing into the ministry certain young men, of whom Mr. Ewing was the most conspicuous.

II. By his sketches of certain characters, including some of those who became the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, of whom Mr. Ewing was the most prominent and active.

III. By his representations of the doctrines of the latter class of men.

IV. By his unqualified censures of the revival of 1800, which gave birth to the Cumberland Presbyterian church, confounding the true friends and promoters of that glorious work with the Stoneites, or New Lights, the abettors of acknowledged heresy.

Justice to the subject of this biography will require some attention to these four methods of defamation, which will be given in succeeding chapters: other reprehensible matters belong more properly to the ecclesiastical historian.

CHAPTER XXVI.

REVIEW OF DAVIDSON.

His strictures on the official acts of some members of Transylvania Presbytery, who afterwards became the majority of the old Cumberland Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church, in regard to their bringing into the ministry certain young men, of whom Mr. Ewing was the most conspicuous.

IN the first place it may be proper to notice two very severe strictures, on the official acts of the evangelical members of Transylvania Presbytery: First on the subject of the places which the Presbytery selected for meeting; and second on "the clashing of the appointments of the Presbytery and the Synod." On these two subjects the historian tells us, in a note on page 225, "it is observable that Mr. Smith is silent:" evidently intending to make the impression, that he was prudently so, or that an obvious wrong in both cases induced him to pass them in utter silence. On a fair investigation of the true state of the facts, it is highly probable that the historian may wish he too had been silent or had exercised more caution, respecting them.

1. With regard to the places of meeting, he has thought proper to enlighten the public in the following strain.

"The lower members* now had every thing under

* By which is meant those whom we style the evangelical members, afterwards constituting the majority of Cumberland Presbytery.

their own control. With the exception of a called meeting to ordain Mr. Robertson, at New Providence, they had not permitted a single meeting out of their own bounds for the space of a year; and it was with a view, no doubt, to the maintenance of their ascendancy that the last adjournment had been made to a spot still farther to the south-west. The great body of the Presbytery being so far removed from the seat of operations, found it extremely inconvenient to attend.”*

This is a grave charge. It amounts to no less than base treachery against God and their co-presbyters, with the criminal motive of selfish aggrandizement: an appointment to transact business for eternity, “with a view to their own ascendancy!” This charge, if true, would stamp the memory of those ministers with indelible infamy. “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon,” that Presbyterian ministers, of any school, have been guilty of this shameless fraud, this self-seeking hypocrisy! And yet these men were in their day the acknowledged instruments, under God, of the conversion of thousands. Their praise was in all the churches, which were watered by their self-sacrificing labors. Their memory is still precious to all who know their true history, except worldlings who shun the light which reproves them, a few infidels who love not the truth, and some old Presbyterians at the west who opposed the revival, wherein God was pleased to honor their instrumentality. We might expect no historian ever to hazard so foul a charge against such men, without

* Davidson, page 225

the fullest, most indubitable evidence of its truth. And in giving publicity to a charge so startling, the whole proof, relied on for sustaining it, may be expected to accompany it. What is the nature and amount of this astounding proof? Without remembering the propriety of appointing the meetings of Presbytery where the revival was prevailing — without considering the difficulty of only five votes controlling more than twice their number — the learned historian accuses ministers, of his own communion, of a scandalous crime, imputes to them a base motive, and his accompanying proof is neither more nor less than his own “*no doubt*.” This is all. On this the reader must rely, or repudiate the charge as groundless. Party spirit may take up a mere vague suspicion, and by bandying it about for a while within a certain circle, exalt it into a fancied certainty. But then it ought not to be supposed that those without that circle and its peculiar influences, can admit suspicion for proof, accusation for certainty, or “*no doubt*” for satisfactory evidence. “*Credat Judæus Apella*.”

2. With regard to the clashing of the appointments of the Presbytery and the Synod, the historian has deemed it necessary to quicken the perception of Christendom in this way : —

“There is another circumstance to be taken into view, and not even charity can vindicate it, except on the score of an ignorance itself culpable. The day to which they had adjourned, was but about a week previous to that appointed by the General Assembly for so important an occasion as the first meeting of the Synod

of Kentucky, at Lexington, nearly two hundred miles distant." *

Is the "circumstance" an abomination so utterly vile, that "*not even charity can vindicate it, except on the score of an ignorance itself culpable?*" Indeed! "Charity is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil," &c.† And there is something said about becoming "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," which would not be consistent with the dignity of an ecclesiastical historian, especially when speaking of ministers of his own denomination. "And above all things, have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."‡ Has it come to this, that confessedly good men, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith — who were, in the spirit and power of evangelism, so far in advance of the ministers of their own church, that in the judgment of the latter even charity itself cannot vindicate their solemn official acts — must find their defenders among those of another denomination? Be it so. The writer of this biography will endeavor to award justice to whomsoever it may be due.

There certainly was a clashing of the appointments of the Presbytery and the Synod. But the question is, who caused this clashing? If it can be shown that the meeting of the Presbytery was appointed before that of the Synod could possibly be known, the act of the former craves not charity, but demands justice, for its vindication. Now, according to the statements of the historian himself, the Presbytery met April 13th, 1802,

* Dav., p. 226.

† 1 Cor. xiii, 5.

‡ 1 Peter iv, 8.

and after a few days adjourned, appointing its next meeting, October 5th, 1802. It so happened that the General Assembly, in the latter part of May, of the same year, appointed the first meeting of the Synod of Kentucky, about one week subsequent to the Presbytery's meeting. It turns out on investigation, that the appointment for the meeting of the Presbytery was made more than a month before any appointment was made for the meeting of the Synod. The Presbytery was not gifted with prescience, and consequently could not foresee, that another body, to meet hundreds of miles distant, would, in the month succeeding, make an appointment for the meeting of the Synod of Kentucky, clashing with their own. In the view of all, therefore, who respect truth and justice, this act of these ministers will be triumphantly vindicated. But then the materials on which the historian relied for his statements, may be a little more closely scrutinized; and it is presumable, that he will not only retract both of these charges, but make other corrections in a future edition of his work.

The historian implies a **censure** on these ministers for cordially receiving "James Hawe, a republican Methodist preacher, and a violent denouncer of Presbyterianism, both from the pulpit and the press." He more than insinuates that this was done without any proof of his worth or soundness in the faith. For he says in so many words, "there is no evidence of his examination or recantation." * This is one way of making

* Davidson's History, page 228.

an impression; but it is quite as justifiable as that of a committee of Synod, in 1805, who say, "we have never heard of Mr. Hawe's recanting, &c."* There is no evidence! And we have never heard! Why? Doubtless, because the record of the circumstance does not appear on the minutes. The voluntary application and cordial reception of so noted a character, and violent denouncer of Presbyterianism ought to be sufficient evidence of his recantation, though the Clerk may have failed to record it. But there is additional evidence. Not one or more members of the Transylvania Presbytery, in which the evangelical party was greatly outnumbered, entered a dissent or complaint; nor did party spirit rise sufficiently high to bring the affair before the Synod, until about three years after Mr. Hawe's reception. Could this have possibly happened, among so many guardians of orthodoxy, if there had been actually no recantation nor examination? No man in his senses, acquainted with Presbyterian usages, can possibly believe it. †

But Mr. Hawe was admitted to membership and to

* Smith's History, page 599.

† There is very strong presumptive evidence for the belief that Mr. Hawe, after examination either by the Presbytery or a committee did adopt the Confession of Faith. Perhaps, as was usual in that and the Presbytery in North Carolina, his conscientious scruples were sufficiently respected to allow him to make the exception of fatality. The circumstance of there being no record of the fact is no evidence against it. It was not usual to record every circumstance, neither was it necessary to record this. Hawe's reception by Transylvania Presbytery ought to have been sufficient evidence of his examination and recantation to all acquainted with the men and

the ministerial office in the Presbyterian church, whether with or without examination and recantation, is of little moment to the writer. The important question is, by what Presbytery was he received? The historian admits that he was received by the Transylvania and not by the Cumberland Presbytery, and quotes the minutes of the former body in evidence of the fact. But the Synod of Kentucky, by a blunder almost too absurd for belief, made this reception of Mr. Hawe one of the grounds of their unjust and unconstitutional proceedings against the Cumberland Presbytery, which finally led to the separation; thus imposing upon their apologists the very unenviable necessity of making as plausible a justification for the Synod as the awkward circumstances will admit. It is a hard necessity: so all appear to feel who have attempted it. It is no easy task to hold one Presbytery responsible for another's acts, committed years before; and they who undertake it may receive the recompense of a party's good will; but the rest of mankind will award a different sentiment. It is difficult to say, whether surprise or amusement will

Presbyterian usage. In April, 1802, Rev. Jeremiah Abel, of the Republican Methodist Society, was also received by Transylvania Presbytery. And still Dr. Davidson acknowledges, it is not stated whether he adopted the Confession of Faith or not; page 225. That he did so, there can be little doubt; since Dr. Bishop, in his memoir, page 106, speaks of Rev. Mr. Abel, as the much esteemed friend of Dr. Rice, who was with that venerable patriarch in his dying moments. In both cases nothing is stated about the adoption of the Confession of Faith. Why then was there no clamor about Abel's case? The secret is out, when it is told that Abel was not associated with the revival party.

predominate with those who read what the historian says in a note on page 236, as follows :

“ But Mr. Hawe, though admitted on application by Transylvania, did not take his seat till the first meeting of Cumberland Presbytery, after the division, as appears from the minutes of Cumberland Presbytery ; page 600. Then was the appropriate time to have examined him personally.”

What ! after he had actually become a member, “ cordially received,” “ admitted on application ? ” As well might it have been an appropriate time to examine any other or all other members. Examination should go before membership. Who ever heard of admitting a man to the office of a gospel minister, and afterwards examining into his worthiness and qualifications for such office ?

When the Cumberland Presbytery was, by the Synod of Kentucky, constituted out of the lower portion of Transylvania Presbytery, the former was to comprise all the ministers within certain bounds. One of these was the Rev. James Hawe who, after having been “ cordially received ” by the parent Presbytery, had discharged his ministerial duties without being complained of, for either heresy or immorality. Why did not those inveterate opposers, Craighead, Templin, Bowman, Donnell, and Balch, if “ then was the appropriate time to have examined him,” propose such examination ? Evidently because they knew the absurdity of the thing. Examination, at the time and under the circumstances, seems to be a new and original

idea, the credit of which is to be awarded to the sagacity of the historian.

Another of the official acts of these ministers, to which the historian objects, is their licensing and sending forth exhorters to labor among the destitute. He expresses his disapprobation in part as follows:—

“The exhorters, burning with zeal, traveled incessantly through the vacant congregations upon their ‘circuits,’ (a device borrowed from the Methodists two years before,) exhorting without the formality of a text.”

The Transylvania Presbytery was, long before, in the practice of licensing men to exhort without the formality of a text. This is mentioned with apparent approbation. The objection, therefore, must be to the burning zeal, incessant traveling, and borrowed device. The Waldenses engaged in these practices with great success. The history of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, affords some noble examples of itinerant preaching. And even Presbyterians, Old as well as New School, have to some extent entitled themselves to similar praise. Besides, there is an ancient record, styled the Acts of the Apostles, which tells the story of those who—it may be inferred—“burning with zeal, traveled incessantly throughout the vacant congregations.” May not the device have been borrowed from a higher source than the Methodists? And how does the learned historian interpret our Lord’s commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Could he interpret this in a way to justify the anti-

revival ministers, in remaining stationary and preaching only on Sabbaths, their cold, formal, sapless discourses, suited to drowsy eyes and slumbering consciences; while the Macedonian cry was coming to them from every quarter? Would he construe this command so as to justify Dr. Craighead's eloquent tirades against the revival, or Mr. Balch's "publicly opposing the doctrines of faith, repentance, and regeneration?" * Would he, in all candor, dare to deny, that the times actually called for traveling exhorters of some kind, even though "burning with zeal?"

It is possible that the historian's censure is cast, not so much upon itinerant exhorters, as those whom he is pleased to style "illiterate exhorters," under which epithet he includes all, without exception. Were they as illiterate as Simon, Andrew, James, and John, when they forsook their nets to be made fishers of men? And were they destined to continue thus hopelessly illiterate, deprived of all means of improvement? Verily, no: the intention of the Presbytery was, and the history of these exhorters proved, far otherwise. The question here is not with regard to a learned ministry: that ministers should be well educated and thoroughly furnished for their high vocation, is undeniable. But the question is, whether under circumstances the most extraordinary ever known in the American church, men of acknowledged talents, intelligence, and piety, "burning with zeal," may be licensed to exhort their fellow beings, although they may not have acquired the

* Smith's History, p. 568.

full knowledge of original languages, required by the Book of Discipline? At a time when a glorious work of God was in progress, hundreds and thousands inquiring the way of salvation — when the evangelical ministers could do but little towards supplying the destitutions of the church and country; and too many of their brethren, like Meroz, came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty — was it right, according to Presbyterian usages and rules of discipline, to authorize and send forth these exhorters? It is presumed no one, relying on the word of God, will dispute either the propriety or the justness of the measure; and if so, the course of these presbyters is justified by the highest authority. But can it be justified by the laws of Presbyterianism?

When doubtful questions arise, whether in civil or ecclesiastical law, we in America consult the codes and decisions of the courts in the parent state or church. Presbyterians in this country have always been in the habit of looking to the practice of the Presbyterian church of Scotland, for precedents and rules of discipline; and in this way many a vexed question has been settled. In the same way the question under consideration may be put to rest forever, by reference to the rules of discipline as well as the practice of the Scottish church, with regard to a class of men styled exhorters and readers.

“This latter class consisted of the most pious persons that could be found, who, having received a common education, were able to read to their more ignorant neighbors, though not qualified for the ministry. When

the readers were found to have discharged their duty well, and to have increased in their own knowledge, they were encouraged to add a few plain exhortations to the reading of the scriptures, and then they were termed exhorters. If they still continued to improve, they might finally be admitted to the ministry.” *

The above paragraph is a quotation from an abstract of the principles of the Book of Discipline, concerning which this Scottish historian speaks as follows:

“Such were the fundamental principles and the chief points of the government and discipline of the Church of Scotland, as stated in the Book of Discipline, drawn up by John Knox and the most eminent of the Scottish Reformers, approved by the General Assembly, and subscribed by the majority of the nobles, and inferior barons and gentry, composing the privy council of the kingdom.” †

Although the interference of the civil power afterwards produced changes in parts of the discipline, there is no evidence that the article in question has ever been changed. Of the discipline itself, Hetherington informs us that “it contains the deliberate opinions of the Scottish Reformers, respecting what they regarded as the fundamental principles of the church;” and of the abstract, it is “what the church of Scotland, from the beginning, has either been or striven to be.” Now, whatever changes the iniquitous law of patronage, and the arbitrary practice of intrusion may have at any time introduced, they do not even

* Hetherington's History of the Church of Scotland. p. 54.

† *Ib.*, p. 57.

affect, or in the slightest degree invalidate the fundamental principles which the Church of Scotland has always striven to maintain.

It may here be asserted, without the fear of contradiction, that Finis Ewing, Alexander Anderson, Samuel King, and many other exhorters of this period, who afterwards devoted their whole lives to the ministry, and blessed the church and the world by their labors of love, were in every respect equal to what the discipline of the Church of Scotland required in such interesting cases. They were, in the judgment of a majority of their Presbytery, and all who knew them, "of the most pious persons that could be found." Every one of them "had received a common education," at least; some of them were more or less advanced in languages and sciences. They "discharged their duty well;" they "increased in their own knowledge;" they "continued to improve," and finally "were admitted to the ministry."

If these statements are true, it may be inquired, in what respect did these young men fall short of what was required by "the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism," as given in the extract from Hetherington? All must see that they fell short in nothing. But they were opposed by certain old ministers of their own Presbytery who also opposed the revival from its very beginning; and most of these opposers afterwards were known to have adopted what Presbyterians regard as abominable heresies. But opposition to right principles and practices — least of all the opposition of such men,

— can never make those principles and practices wrong; and we have seen by how high authority these principles and practices are sustained. Besides, most of the young men thus admitted to the ministry, after rendering their names illustrious by their extensive and useful labors, have gone to their reward; and many thousands bless their memory. It is thought unnecessary to offer any thing in proof of the statements respecting these men, because their truth is so well known, that no infidel, no errorist, and indeed no member of any church, who has a character, would be willing to hazard it by a denial.

If the word of God, the practice of the Apostles, the principles and practice of one of the oldest, most enlightened and evangelical churches of the Reformation, are to be regarded as good authority, the licensure and ordination of Finis Ewing and the other founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church must stand fully justified, beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt or successful denial. It follows of course that the memory of these good and venerable men is cleared of the stain which party spirit and sectarian zeal have endeavored to cast upon their ministerial character.

This ingenious historian introduces into his work the strictures already noticed in this chapter, evidently for the purpose of justifying, or at least of apologizing for, the tyrannical proceedings of the Synod of Kentucky, against the Cumberland Presbytery. The readers of this biography, who may not have seen Dr. Davidson's History, will perhaps be startled at the suggestion that he should, out of threads so slender and so easily broken,

seek to manufacture a web of justification for the Synod's proceedings. And let it not be said that *justification* is a word implying too great severity upon the historian. It is not so. If there is meaning in his words, if there is sense in the scope of his narration, he attempts more than an apology; his design is to *defend* the Synod's acts before his readers. It cannot be said that he merely details the statements of others at second hand, without investigation and avouchment of their truth. He sets them forth with as much apparent confidence as any man could, who had fully and impartially examined and found all true. He scarcely expresses a doubt concerning any one of them. He does even more. His reasonings and his inferences all go to sustain them; and his colorings are evidently intended to *justify* the Synod. But how does he aim to accomplish so difficult a task? His strictures and their demolition, in this chapter will show: evidently by a mode of logic peculiar to Old School Presbyterians. By this kind of logic, "might makes right;" and whole Synods were at a later period cut off at one stroke, without even the form of trial; which violence produced what is invidiously termed "the New School Schism." And what is there, which such logic cannot prove? Indeed and in truth, the historian does endeavor to prove, *First*, that the Synod and her Commission were justifiable in demanding the surrender of certain ordained Ministers, Licenciates and Candidates of Cumberland Presbytery, to the said Commission for re-examination, when no charge of heresy or immorality had been regularly brought against them;

Second, that the majority of Cumberland Presbytery were censurable, for refusing to submit to so tyrannical and unheard of a proceeding; *Third*, that the final decision of the Commission in the premises was neither unjust nor unconstitutional. These propositions he has attempted to prove; and to these he shall be held. There is no escape for him; and the logic of his school can never deliver him from the righteous verdict, which public sentiment will not fail to award to his acuteness.

In reply to Mr. Rice's letter, written by direction of Transylvania Presbytery, to the General Assembly, meeting in Philadelphia, "requesting advice and direction on the delicate point of licensing men to preach without a liberal education," that venerable body spake as follows:

"A liberal education, though not absolutely essential, has been shown to be highly important and useful, from reason, experience and the prosperity of the Presbyterian and New England churches. But whatever might be the Assembly's opinion, the standards are explicit on the subject. As to the apprehension of schism in consequence of rigid views, the reply must be, that the path of duty is the path of safety, and events are to be committed to God. Parties formed under such circumstances would neither be important nor permanent. Notwithstanding, when the field is too extensive, catechists, like those of primitive times, may be found useful assistants. But great caution should be used in selecting *prudent and sound* men, lest they run into extravagance and pride. Their duties should be clearly and precisely defined, and

subject to frequent inspection. They should not be considered standing officers in the church ; but if possessed of uncommon talents, diligent in study, and promising usefulness, they might in time purchase to themselves a good degree, and be admitted in regular course to the holy ministry."

This reply is plain and pertinent, such as might have been expected from the wisdom and piety of its venerable authors. It is truly Presbyterian as well as Christian in its character ; and its sentiments are entirely conformable to those of the first extract given from the discipline of the Scottish church. If the opposers of the revival had better understood the true spirit and usages of Presbyterianism, and followed the "advice and direction," given in this reply to Dr. Rice's letter, it is impossible to estimate the blessed consequences which might, and probably would have resulted to Christian unity and the glory of Christ's cause. Had they simply done nothing, but allowed the friends of the revival to conduct it, unmolested, without stirring up men's evil passions and bringing ecclesiastical tyranny to oppose its progress ; it is almost certain there would have been no "schism," no separation ; and hundreds and thousands whose multiplied descendants are now the ornaments and supporters of other denominations, would, as they ardently desired, have lived and died in the Presbyterian church. As in 1740, so in a much greater degree in 1800, many, wearied with contention, sought quiet in other communions. And in the case hypothetically stated, might not the historian have been spared

the pain of recording the heresies of Craighead and the Stoneites, as well as many other "extravagances and disorder?" A revival is a work of God; but some men, in their fancied wisdom, undertook to regulate it, to reduce it to certain rules — "*unquem latum non discedere*" — from which it was not to vary in the least. So "Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him."* It is not our business to trench upon the ground of the ecclesiastical historian, by proving that the friends of the revival did, but their opponents did not, follow the advice and direction given in this reply of the Assembly, however ample materials may exist for settling that question. The object of biography is accomplished by producing the reply itself which so fully and unequivocally justifies the licensure and ordination of Mr. Ewing. And it certainly is strong evidence of the candor of the historian, when he introduces a document which militates so egregiously against the scope of his narrative and the force of his argument.

The historian, in a somewhat vague and desultory manner, proceeds to the establishing of the three points already noticed, justificatory of the Synod, by adverting to the complaint of Craighead, Donnell, and Bowman, "*against the doings of the majority*" of Cumberland Presbytery.† These three ministers, together with Templin and Balch, as he elsewhere expressly declares, constituted the "anti-revival party." Three of them,

* 1 Chron. xlii, 9 — 10.

† Dav. His., p. 230.

with two elders, had years before dissented from the act of a large majority in licensing Ewing and King; and though they mustered a long list of reasons, evidently of little importance in the estimation of their own party, there is not one word about the one exception made by the licentiates to the Confession of Faith. Even the historian himself, in the ingenuousness of his nature seems surprised at this, and inquires whether "the silence was to be ascribed to a secret sympathy with heresy ere long about to avow itself?"* But now, in October, 1804, the Synod of Kentucky receive the complaint of these men "*against the doings of the majority,*" which may mean very little or very much.

When men really have well founded cause of complaint, they know very well what they complain of; and they find no difficulty in letting others know, especially those to whom they complain, for the sake of redress. But when jealousy, envy, disappointed ambition, or any thing not so creditable to avow, is the secret motive, there generally is more or less vacillation between certain ostensible causes of complaint, and it becomes difficult to tell which is the most prominent. This is doing the thing after the fashion of a skillful bowman, who provides himself with two or more strings, that he may still be furnished if one should break. By this time Ewing, King, and Anderson had

* He knows very well that none of these licentiates, nor of the Cumberland Presbyterian body ever sympathized with the heresies afterwards avowed by Craighead, or the Stoneites, or New Lights, but uniformly exposed them.

won the esteem and confidence of the pious and intelligent public generally, insomuch that many of their opposers could secure but few hearers at a time when either of the former were known to be holding meeting within the distance of a few miles; hence, complaints affecting them were more loud but less specific than formerly. And it is worthy of remark, that after the lapse of almost half a century, it is a subject of debate whether the prominent cause of complaint and censures against the Cumberland Presbytery for licensing and ordaining certain young men, was because they were permitted to adopt the Confession of Faith with the exception of fatality or only so far as agreeable to the word of God, or because they had not completed a classical education; or whether both were causes equally prominent. To say that the former was the cause of complaint, was to sustain the old members of Cumberland Presbytery, according to Presbyterian usage in North Carolina, where most of them had been trained for the ministry.* To say that the latter was the cause, would be to sustain them, on the ground that most of these young men were so much superior in literary attainments to one of their own number,† whose licensure and ordi-

* They adopted the Confession of Faith as far as they understood it, meaning that they did not understand what is taught concerning eternal election and reprobation. The same course, we are informed, was pursued in the Presbytery in North Carolina, to which most of the old members of Cumberland Presbytery had formerly been attached. — *Note in Smith's His.*, p. 598.

† As the literary attainments of Mr. Hodge were inferior to those of most of the young men licensed and ordained by Cumberland

nation by Cumberland Presbytery were afterwards recognized and confirmed by Transylvania Presbytery. To say that both were causes equally prominent, is still triumphantly to sustain them by the doings of Presbyterians themselves. A very few years since, a little controversy sprung up between two church papers, the one an Old School, and the other a Cumberland Presbyterian, on this subject, or more particularly on the causes which led to the separation; and the worthy Old School editor, being too wise to advocate what is untenable, and too generous to uphold what is unjust, very prudently dropped the subject, leaving the affair "*lis in lite.*" And here it must remain, until the good brethren of the Old School in the west have the magnanimity to acknowledge the error of some of their fathers; some in the east have already done this. The case seems quite plain to all who look at it impartially, and may be thus fairly stated:

In the glorious revival of 1800, when the destitutions of the church and the country were great beyond any known example in this country, some of the most pious and intelligent young men were appointed to the office of catechists and exhorters. These continued to dis-

Presbytery, we are warranted in the conclusion that the only very serious difficulty existing between the two bodies consisted in the rejection by the Council of what they deemed fatality. — *Smith's His.*, pp. 637, 638.

If Samuel Hodge's licensure and ordination by Cumberland Presbytery were unconstitutional and wrong, it is difficult to see how they could be recognized and confirmed as being constitutional and right, except by the peculiar logic already referred to.

charge their duty faithfully, and growing in grace and knowledge, were licensed to preach; and after they had sufficiently evinced their aptness to teach, and had "purchased to themselves a good degree, they were admitted in regular course to the holy ministry." However, according to the practice of a Presbytery in North Carolina in which most of their spiritual fathers had been trained, their honest scruples were respected; and they adopted the Confession of Faith, with the exception of the idea of fatality which seemed to them to be taught in that book under the high and mysterious doctrine of election and reprobation.* Certain opposers of the revival from the first, contended that these licences and ordinations were all wrong. Could they, or can their sympathizers now show them to have been unconstitutional or un-presbyterian? Before they can do so, they must prove the discipline and practice of the Church of Scotland a perfect nullity, the Assembly's advice and direction to Dr. Rice a sheer fallacy,

* Rev. Barton W. Stone, who for many years was esteemed an acceptable and useful minister in the Presbyterian church, though he afterwards became the leader of the party called Stoneites, was originally admitted to the ministry in that church, notwithstanding his conscientious scruples which impelled him to the adoption of the Confession of Faith, with the same or a similar exception.

Rev. Samuel K. Nelson, the able and eloquent pastor of the Presbyterian church at Danville, Kentucky — who, having fulfilled the duties of his agency for the sale of lands granted by Congress to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum of Kentucky, died a martyr to the cause of philanthropy, in Florida — informed the writer that he too had been admitted to the ministry, making the same exception to the Confession of Faith. He mentioned also several other similar instances which are not specifically recollected.

the scruples of conscience regarded by the Presbytery in North Carolina as well as by other Presbyteries, an unmeaning farce, and the act of Transylvania Presbytery in the case of Rev. Samuel Hodge, more censurable and degrading than all. This can never be done.

The reader is, doubtless, prepared fully to justify the evangelical ministers of the Cumberland Presbytery, in ordaining Mr. Ewing and others of a like character. But what will be thought of the Synod of Kentucky, when it is known that the strange proceedings of that body were founded on the letter of Craighead, Donnell, and Bowman, already noticed? A mere common fame letter! And from such men! The attentive reader has, doubtless, made up his judgment of the character of Craighead. Donnell was one of those whom Smith and Davidson unite in declaring, "neither qualified by nature or education to be conspicuous or influential." * Bowman "was accused of being a Stoneite; and afterwards suspended by Transylvania Presbytery, for refusing to appear and answer to the charge of heresy and schism." † This was a notable trio to stir up that venerable body to appoint what the evangelical Scotch would call "a riding committee," vested with full Synodical powers — a Commission acknowledged by its apologist, Dr. Davidson, without precedent, and, thus far, without imitation. ‡

If there are yet living any of the sympathizers with this Commission, or any of its original approvers, still untaught in the science of Presbyterianism, they will

* Davidson's History, page 229.

† *Ib.*

‡ *Ib.*, page 242.

probably think they have reason for gratitude to the historian, for his prudent reserve respecting the "*fama clamosa*" letter of this trio, on which the Commission based their strange proceedings. But Smith is not so very modest. He speaks the thing *right out*, regardless of any tingling of cheeks it may occasion. After noticing the Commission's unreasonable demand, that the young men, whether ordained, licensed, or candidates, both the learned and less learned, should be surrendered to their examination, and the Presbytery's very just and proper refusal—after reprobating in suitable terms the injustice and tyranny of the Commission, in prohibiting all the young men from exhorting, preaching, and administering the ordinances, as well as in citing the evangelical ministers to appear before Synod and answer to certain unfounded charges—he unhesitatingly introduces the Commission's concluding resolution, in the following words:—

"*Resolved*, That Thomas B. Craighead, Samuel Donnell, and John Bowman, have acted irregularly, in taking up the case by *fama clamosa*, and not by dissent." *

It might not be respectful to the reverend authors of this resolution, to say that it stultified all their previous acts in the premises; but to say that it nullified, and rendered all void, would be strictly true. It sweeps away the entire foundation of the huge fabric, which, during "a weary session of eight days," they had been laboring to erect. The monstrous mass of materials, collected on the credit of this common fame letter, is

* Smith's History, p. 612.

prostrate and scattered to the four winds; and truth and justice cannot find a vestige left. Even Dr. Smith, with the natural shrewdness of the Scotch character, saw this. Its palpableness could not escape his penetration; and, after declaring that, "from the showing of the Commission, the business came before them irregularly, they took it up irregularly; and the whole of their proceedings, from first to last, were irregular and unconstitutional;"* he virtually charges the guilt of schism upon the Synod of Kentucky, in terms of strong reprobation. How his conscience will allow him to hold ecclesiastical connection with those, who, after almost half a century, show no disposition to acknowledge their error nor repair the injury it has inflicted, is not for us to inquire. The Council's letter of remonstrance to the General Assembly, in 1807, will exhibit the doings of this Commission in a just light. See Appendix, A.

The monstrous injustice and despotic character of the proceedings of Kentucky Synod, by her Commission, have been so often and triumphantly proved, and so unequivocally acknowledged by some of the ablest men and soundest disciplinarians in the whole Presbyterian church,† that it would be superfluous to say much on that subject. By the Constitution of the Presbyterian

* Smith's History, p. 612,

† Rev. Dr. Ely, of Philadelphia, in his brief history of the Cumberland Presbyterians, in relation to the procedure of Kentucky Synod, says: "There can be no doubt now, in the mind of any sound Presbyterian, but that the *suspension* of the ministers above named was wholly unconstitutional, and ought to be held void." *Smith's History*, p. 617.

church, Presbyteries are authorized to license and ordain their candidates for the ministry, even though they may not have completed the usual course of academical studies, &c., "in extraordinary cases."* This the Cumberland Presbytery did in the great revival, the most extraordinary case ever known on the American continent, the exercises having been exhibited "at the discretion of Presbytery."† A discretionary power is given to Presbytery. And the power "to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry, to ordain, install, remove, and judge ministers, is granted expressly and exclusively to the Presbytery, and to no other judicatory in the church.‡ But the Kentucky Synod were stimulated by certain opposers of the revival, men of doubtful piety, and of little influence where they were well known, to send forth a Commission who assumed to examine candidates, licentiates, and ordained ministers, and judge of their qualifications. This Commission did not undertake judicially to try the Presbytery, which might have been constitutionally done; but to exercise the discretionary powers, and assume the peculiar responsibilities which are assigned to the Presbytery alone, by the Constitution. This spiritual despotism was nobly and righteously resisted. Hence followed prohibitions, suspensions, and "schism;" for which God and posterity will hold the Synod of Kentucky responsible.

Can it be possible that the Synod of Kentucky and all the members of the Commission were so unskilled

* Chap. xiv, Art. 6.

† Chap. xiv, Art. 5.

‡ Chap. x, Art. 8.

in Presbyterian Church government, that they utterly failed to distinguish between the judicial power by which they might have proceeded against the Presbytery as such, to "redress whatever (if any thing) has been done by Presbyteries contrary to order,"* and that ministerial power by which alone candidates can be licensed and ordained? Indeed, they ought to have known John Knox and the struggles of the evangelical Scotch a little better. Dr. Hetherington, in his history of the Church of Scotland, arguing the case of the Strath-bogie seven, page 437, assumes as a well-known and indisputable fact, that "ordination is not a judicial but a ministerial act." Then, of course, the trial and licensure of candidates must be ministerial acts. Praying, preaching, and administering the ordinances, are also ministerial acts. Can any earthly power render abortive or nullify ministerial acts? Can a Synod or her commission nullify a prayer already offered? or render abortive a sermon actually preached? or invalidate a baptism actually administered? or abrogate the eucharist solemnly celebrated? An affirmative answer would be met with nothing less than scorn and contempt. In the same category would stand the annulment of an ordination, performed "by prayer and with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery;" for all are ministerial acts. It is true, those authorized to do these acts are responsible to their own Presbytery, whence they derived their authority, for performing them aright; but in no case can Synod take cognizance

* Chap. xi, Art. 4.

of them, until after they have come before Presbytery by regular judicial process, and from thence been carried up by reference or appeal.

Of the young men who were required by the Commission of Synod to be surrendered to them for their examination, four were ordained. The Commission evidently intended, either to confirm or to annul these ordinations at their own discretion, after ascertaining the qualifications of the men. It cannot be supposed that they intended at all event to confirm any or all; for this would be to accuse them of mental prejudgment before trial, and to stamp the examination demanded, with the name of a deceptive farce. Those good men could never be guilty of prejudgment, either for confirmation or annulment. Then it must be evident that they intended to annul these ordinations, provided they did not approve of the young ministers' qualifications. Suppose they had done so; then they had placed themselves in a most unenviable predicament before posterity and the world, as novices in church government, usurpers of the rights of the Presbytery and nullifiers of one of the most important of all ministerial acts. Verily the great Presbyterian family ought to raise a monument to the memory of those abused revival ministers for their noble refusal which may have saved the denominational reputation from so foul a blot. And gratitude is due to them and their no less abused successors who, by their stern resistance to ecclesiastical domination, have saved the most scriptural and beautiful form of church government known in the annals of Christianity, from

being held up before the world, full of contradictions and absurdities.

The learned historian, after concluding his account* of the doings of the Commission, with a little more than his usual warmth, accuses some one of the "grossest ignorance," &c., as follows :

"The charge that this was an un-Presbyterian measure could have originated only in the grossest ignorance of the practice of the mother church of Scotland."

The mother church of Scotland has not always been uniform in her practice, because corrupt parties have, at various times, gained an ascendancy in her government. The exodus of the evangelical Free Church was occasioned by the tyrannical acts of the corrupt "moderate party," so called. The writer of this biography knows not to whom the respectable historian imputes this "grossest ignorance," whether to an individual or to a whole denomination. But he would here respectfully say to him, and all whom it may concern, that he does charge and will be prepared to prove, that the doings of the Synod of Kentucky, by her commission in the matters alluded to, are un-Presbyterian, according to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church of the United States and that discipline which the evangelical Scotch Church has ever striven to maintain — whenever any old school minister of reputation for piety, talents, and learning shall propose to maintain the contrary in a written discussion under suitable regulations.

* Dav. His., p. 243.

The historian next endeavors to sustain what he says in the sentence above quoted from his book, by an extract from "Stewart of Pardovan" — the only quotation from Scotch authorities noticed in his whole work. But what does his extract prove? Simply the difference between Committees and Commissions, and that the latter can do all that the judicatory appointing them empowers them to do. This has so little relevancy to the question at issue, that it may not be worth while now to see how Stewart of Pardovan can be arrayed against "Stewart of Pardovan." But granting all that the writer named has said and all Dr. Davidson has attempted to prove, what is the amount? Only this: that the Commission acted by authority delegated to them by the Synod of Kentucky. But it is contended that the Synod neither had, nor could exercise, nor could delegate any such authority. Consequently the Commission acted not only without authority but unlawfully, as the Synod would have done, if that body had perpetrated the same.*

* The unconstitutional enroachment of the Synod of Philadelphia on the rights of Presbytery, which was one of the principle causes of the great schism in the Presbyterian church of America, may not be generally known. Tracy's account is as follows:

"In 1738, the Synod enacted, that young men be required to produce a diploma from some European or New England College, *be examined respecting their literature by a commission of the Synod*, and obtain a testimony of their approbation, *before they can be taken on trial by any Presbytery*. This brought matters rapidly towards a crisis."

"This act was also opposed, as an infringement on the rights of Presbyteries, to whom, it was contended, that the great Head of the Church has committed the entire power of licensing and ordination," page 62.

At the time of the Reformation the Scottish church enjoyed purity and peace in as high a degree as any Christian church whatever. At length ambitious and corrupt men crept in; and one struggle after another had to be maintained by the pure and spiritual Christians, against the nominal and worldly minded professors. Sometimes even the higher church courts fell under the sway of men who appear to have been little better than wolves devouring the flock. Ministerial acts were abrogated, the rights of conscience disregarded, and the rights of Presbyteries trodden in the dust.

This was done for the most part by the tyrannical authority, of the corrupt "moderate party," appointing a servile Commission to perform the vile tasks assigned them; until the evangelical party could bear this intolerable oppression and unscrupulous violation of their spiritual rights no longer; and they seceded in a body and constituted the Free Church. Let them, in the Church of Scotland, and the Cumberland Presbyterians

In arranging the terms of reunion, on the healing of the great schism in 1758, this tyrannical encroachment on the rights of Presbytery was abandoned, and according to the same author, the following stipulation was entered into: "*The whole subject of licensure and ordination was left to the Presbyteries, without interference from the Synod's committee,*" page 387.

After all this, was it to be expected that any Synod, composed of sane men, would so far lose sight of "the terms of union" and of what God hath ordained in his church, as to interfere with the rights of a Presbytery, in regard to licensure and ordination? Such an enormity can be accounted for, only on the supposition, that the Kentucky Synod had inherited a large share of the absurd notions and tyrannical spirit of their old-side fathers.

in the Church of America, stand as monuments of successful resistance to spiritual despotism.

It may be proper to see where this tyrannical proceeding of sending a Commission to subdue the consciences of a Presbytery had its origin. The higher church court wished to intrude a favorite of their own upon the parish of Peebles; the parishioners opposed it; and a majority of the Presbytery were too conscientious to sanction it. Therefore the higher court appointed a Commission to do what the consciences of the parish and Presbytery could not sanction; and the Scottish historian speaks of the case as follows:

“By this device both the opposition of the people and the conscientious reluctance of the Presbytery were surmounted, and an unscrupulous hireling intruded upon an unwilling congregation. And it is of importance to mark, that this was the first instance on record in which the superior church courts appointed an ambulatory commission with powers to outvote and overrule the conscientious reluctance of a Presbytery, to inflict a grievous wrong upon the people; giving thereby a precedent to a course of procedure which was a few years afterwards matured into a system under the sway of Moderate policy during its first dynasty when its decrees were regularly carried into effect by those ‘Riding Committees,’ as they were termed, from their dragoon-like array and doughty achievements in the cause of spiritual despotism.” *

It is proper to notice a few things wherein the Com-

* Hetherington's History, page 340, 341.

missions of the corrupt party in the Scottish church and the Commission of the Synod of Kentucky agree, and wherein they differ. Both were the tools of the higher courts, respectively appointing them. Both were to do the bidding of usurped authority. Both were to act regardless of the rights of Presbytery. Both were to do what their brethren in the ministry felt bound in conscience to oppose. The acts of both, though approved by a few partizans, and doubtless by many pious but ill-informed persons at a distance, exasperated the well informed and grieved pious hearts generally where they took effect.* But in some respects there is a difference. The Scottish Commissions were often required to outvote the Presbyters, overrule their conscientious reluctance, and thus arbitrarily carry their measures. But the Synod of Kentucky took higher ground and clothed her

* Dr. Davidson, speaking of the many instances of disrespect and manifestations of opposition to the Commission, says:

"The whole community were exasperated. There was but a single man in the entire neighborhood, (and he lived three or four miles from the church,) who was willing to open his house and extend common hospitality to the members," page 235.

Certainly this was reprehensible. The Commission ought to have been civilly received and hospitably entertained, however ungracious their errand. This inhospitable treatment of the ministers of religion can only be accounted for from the excited state of the public mind. In a region so densely populated, there must have been many professors of that religion which teaches to render good for evil. It is to be regretted that the Spirit of the Divine Teacher was not more fully evinced. But it often happens that the irreligious take the lead on these occasions. It was often so in Scotland; and it sometimes happened that the acts of Commissions produced excitements and disturbances which could only be quelled by the civil authorities.

Commission with full Synodical powers ; and the latter, regardless of Presbyterial rights and conscientious scruples, undertook to overhaul the discretionary powers and proceedings of Presbytery, for years previous, with a view, doubtless, of confirming or annulling them according to their pleasure. The end appears to be the same in both ; but they differ in the means. The Scotch often resisted, but too often without success, owing to their connection with the State. These members of Cumberland Presbytery, in this land of religious liberty, resisted righteously, nobly, and successfully, and deserve, as they will receive, the gratitude of the Christian world.

CHAPTER XXVII.

REVIEW OF DAVIDSON.

His sketches of certain characters, including some of those who became the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, of whom Mr. Ewing was the most prominent and active.

THE historian's sketches of some of members of the Cumberland Presbytery are evidently not such as justice to the worthy dead would require. It is true, Dr. Davidson appears to be a candid writer, and his work affords abundant evidence of his intention to observe accuracy and impartiality. However, his details are given, not from his personal knowledge, but the statements of others; some of whom have been known from first to last, as opposers of the revival of 1800, approvers of the acts of Kentucky Synod, and opponents of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. And his ecclesiastical relation, as well as his locality, must have afforded him ample means of learning all that could be arrayed, whether favorable to the Old School sect, or unfavorable to the so-called "Cumberland Schism." Hence, any inaccuracies or omissions, doing injustice to the latter, may be ascribed less to his want of candor than of caution.

His sketch of Rev. James McGready is calculated to do great injustice to the memory of that good man.

Rev. Thomas Cleland, D. D., who was one of the Commission, and afterwards a defender of its acts in a "Brief History, &c.," — and consequently cannot be suspected of undue partiality towards the Cumberland Presbyterians — in 1848 "felt constrained, from a sense of duty to the worthy dead," to correct the historian, in a letter published in the Louisville "Presbyterian Herald." See Appendix, C. See also Appendix, D, a sketch by Rev. John Andrews.

But the historian's sketch is liable to other objections than those noticed by Dr. Cleland. Having dated "this deplorable occurrence in the career of a zealous minister," about four years after it actually happened, he says, "after this occurrence Mr. McGready's influence and unction in the pulpit were never the same that they had been before."* This representation is calculated to make the impression that the affair was extensively noised abroad and highly censured, insomuch that it prostrated his influence, and destroyed his unction in the pulpit. The truth is, the affair was little known or talked of, except by McGready himself, whose great desire to benefit his fellow men led him to make use of it as a warning to others. And it is not known that it had any effect on his unction or his influence, further than to evince his conscientious abhorrence of the too prevalent use of the deceitful beverage, and to convince both friends and foes of the sincerity of his repentance. It is observable that the historian commences his sketch by advertising his readers that Mr. McGready's "name

* *Dev. His.*, p 261.

was intimately associated with the early history of the Cumberland Presbyterians; and he is still venerated by them as one in sentiment, and the patriarch of their order." In conclusion he significantly remarks, that "after his decease the bulk of his congregation joined the Cumberland Presbyterians." It is possible that the two last circumstances had no tendency to mollify the materials relied on for the sketch.*

The historian accuses Woodward's edition of Buck's Theological Dictionary of a misrepresentation, also Bush's edition of Buck and Brown's Religious Encyclopedia of perpetuating the error; wherein Ewing and King are styled "*regularly* ordained ministers of the Presbyterian church." He speaks of these ministers as "having been prohibited (by the Commission) from preaching, by virtue of any authority derived from

* The materials furnished for the history under consideration must have contained a degree of bitterness calculated to work prejudice against Rev. James McGready. The facts existing in his favor are as important as impressive; and the integrity of history would by no means allow their suppression. Hence, although Dr. Davidson is impelled by truth and consistency to testify to much good, he seems willing to surmise or insinuate rather more evil than seems just against a departed minister of Christ, who, in his day was confessedly a burning and shining light. The following is a single instance:

"But while the Methodists thus boldly claim the credit of the work, it is worthy of notice that Mr. McGready makes no mention of this incident in his account, exhibiting in his silence, perhaps, a degree of spiritual ambition of which the good man was not conscious."

Where was the necessity of casting so ungenerous a suspicion on the pious dead? There is nothing whatever to justify it. Horace characterizes a similar example in these words:

Cumberland Presbytery; whereas, their authority was derived from *Transylvania*, just prior to the erection of *Cumberland*.* It cannot be denied, that the Commission, not as well informed as they might have been, and in their hot haste to extinguish the lights of the revival, prohibited from preaching and administering in consequence of authority obtained from *Cumberland*; thus leaving the authority of Ewing, King, &c., untouched; they having derived *their* authority from *Transylvania* Presbytery. Dr. Davidson calls this “a technical oversight”—“a mere inadvertence”—involving “a legal quibble”—“which he will not undertake to discuss at present.” No: he would not “undertake to discuss it.” He had reasoned the matter sufficiently, on page 226, to justify him, as he doubtless thought, in denouncing “as a mere verbal

——— “*Hic nigræ succus loliginis: hæc est*

Ærugo mera:”

LIE. I, SAT. 4.

Translation. — This is the essence of foul poison; this is mere malice.

The unmentioned incident is trifling in itself, and unworthy of notice — a few words of exhortation by one John McGee — it never deserved any, and, probably, under the circumstances, never would have had any, except for the use made of it by a certain Methodist writer, when it was seized upon by rabid opposers of the revival, as an evidence of undue Methodist influence. Mr. McGready wrote before all these, and made no mention of so unimportant a circumstance, probably never dreaming that the sectaries could, in after times, magnify it into any importance. Is it consistent with the Apostle's exposition of charity, for a dignified ecclesiastical historian to make the omission of so insignificant a circumstance the ground for a charge of “*spiritual ambition*” against a minister who has gone to his reward, and is no longer here to explain or defend himself?

* Dav. His., p. 255.

quibble and disingenuous subterfuge," the acknowledged fact, that the Commission left the authority of Ewing, King, &c., untouched.

Now there was, in the days of Absalom's conspiracy, one Ahithophel, whose counsel was turned into foolishness; and David was spared. And in the days of the Reformation, the legate de Vio's blundering policy, and the Bishop of Asculan's hot haste, actually condemned the reformer before the sixty days granted by the Pope's summons had expired; and Luther escaped. Speaking of the circumstance, the reformer says: "They certainly forgot to clear their brains with hellebore, before they had recourse to such clumsy artifice."* And in the progress of the revival of 1800, a Commission of Kentucky Synod, bent on silencing all the promoters of that gracious work, prohibited from preaching, &c., all who had derived their authority from one Presbytery, unwittingly leaving in the full enjoyment of their ministerial rights, those who had derived their authority from another Presbytery. Will any one pretend, that the righteous providence of God had nothing to do with these things? Will it be said that the defeat of Ahithophel's evil counsel, of the Papists' malicious condemnation, and of the Commission's unjust prohibition, were nothing more than "a technical oversight, a mere inadvertence, a verbal quibble, a disingenuous subterfuge?" Verily these missiles recoil with destructive force. In each case the facts are on record, and will be judged of by the same rule.

* D'Aubigne's History, vol. i, p. 324.

The historian has been rather unfortunate in his interpretation of certain remarks of Mr. Ewing, in his letter to Mr. Smith. Speaking of the College established at Princeton, Ky., by the Cumberland Presbyterians, he says: "Finis Ewing, true to his early prejudices, was not slow to express his apprehensions that the possession of a College would awaken a spirit of pride and self-confidence, and tempt them to lean too much on the arm of flesh."* Reference is here made to Smith, page 663, where Mr. Ewing says: "I never dreaded opposition from any, and every other quarter, so much as a spirit of pride and self-confidence in our own denomination. On this account I feared a General Assembly. On this account I am afraid of a great Theological Seminary, however much such an institution may be needed. On this account I even sometimes tremble, while I rejoice at the almost unparalleled growth of our denomination. And I would say to this, and to all future generations of Cumberland Presbyterians, if you would prosper, *be humble! BE HUMBLE!! BE HUMBLE!!!*"

Here speaks the man who had devoted his youth, his manhood and old age to the interests of a church which, feeble and few, and confined to a section at first, had by this time increased and extended throughout the Mississippi Valley; who was claimed by thousands as their spiritual father. This was the language of a man, naturally bold, sanguine, high-spirited, and self-relying, who had struggled through life against misrepresenta-

* Davidson, p. 259

tions, oppositions, and persecutions; till, finding his strength lay in his weakness, his success in dependence on God, he had learned a lesson of humility which he would teach to succeeding generations. But there is certainly nothing in this passage which can justify any unfavorable inference respecting "his early prejudices," or his views of ministerial education. And the unwarranted inference might have passed unnoticed, but for the belief that some have deemed it expedient to foster, and to diffuse the sentiment, that Cumberland Presbyterians were at least in their origin opposed to ministerial education. Nothing is more untrue or unjust. However, since they have established and endowed colleges, it is said, they have changed their policy. It is a sentiment founded in prejudice, from which even the candid Dr. Davidson is not free, when he says, "although, like the New Side party of the previous century, the Cumberland Presbyterians seemed at first to lay greater stress on piety and zeal in the ministry than on orthodoxy and learning, time and experience wrought a salutary change in their policy; and as a happy consequence, we find the one like the other, by a singular coincidence of names fostering their *Princeton*."

When this country was new, schools and teachers were scarce; and but few were able to bear the expense of sending abroad for education. The revival of 1800, which was at first confined to the Cumberland and Green river settlements, encountered the determined opposition of one half the ministers in the entire region. In so extraordinary a case, pious and intelligent young

men found their services so urgently demanded, that they could not seek education abroad. But even then ministers and people, as they do now, justly appreciated the advantages of education, especially to those who were to labor in word and doctrine. But the means were comparatively unattainable.

With regard to Mr. Ewing, it may be said, although he did not complete his classical studies — owing, as it is supposed, to a suspension of the seminary — there is abundant evidence that he contracted a fondness for reading even in his childhood, and was distinguished among the companions of his youth for his knowledge of books. He was through life, not only a laborious preacher but an indefatigable student. With growth in grace, he connected knowledge of the truth. And in his Lectures to young men, while he urged the necessity of eminent holiness, he did not fail to enjoin diligence in study, in order to mental cultivation. “Learning is the excellent handmaid of religion,” was his his favorite expression.

For a great number of years he afforded, at his own house, gratuitous board and instruction to class after class of young men, preparing for the ministry. Must prejudice misconstrue such a man’s warnings, against pride and self-confidence, and his pleadings, for humility and dependence on God, into “early prejudices” against ministerial education? “*Fiat justitia*” teaches a different maxim. In reply to a letter, written in 1824, consulting him about the establishment of a College, he says: “This is what I have always desired. And

it has been long needed. It shall have my hearty co-operation and support; but let it be undertaken and conducted in humble dependence on God, and with an eye single to his glory and the salvation of precious souls." And in the spring of 1825, he writes, "I expect to be there (at the meeting of the Synod at Princeton) and I hope you will have your plan digested and ready to be submitted. For though the Assembly question may claim much of our time, we must and will take time to consider the subject of which your heart seems so full. There may be a difference of opinion respecting the plan, the location, &c., but none about the school itself. All, I trust, will be prepared to say with you, 'afford to our candidates advantages, equal to those so wisely provided by the mother church.' And while we increase our literary and theological advantages, let us lose not a particle of our trust in God; while we call to our aid human learning, let us most fully rely on that wisdom which is from above. It may be, my dear brother, that Providence has cast your lot among us for good. Lie at the foot of the cross, and take courage; we will have a College or Seminary of some sort."

In the fall of the same year, the Synod met at Princeton, Ky. The plan of a college was submitted, read in the house, and referred to a select committee, of which Rev. Finis Ewing was chairman. The writer being a member of this committee, well remembers—having sometimes had occasion to repeat—many of the venerable man's remarks during the consideration of the subject. Of the

course of study, he said: "Let it be as extensive as that of our best western Colleges generally; it may and probably will be necessary afterwards to enlarge it. It would be desirable that all our candidates could accomplish the entire course; but this the circumstances of some may not admit. Let them be thorough however in whatever they undertake. Superficial learners will be superficial thinkers ever afterwards; and the day for sustaining a reputation by the name merely, without the reality of learning, has passed. The spirit of the age demands thorough knowledge, armor always in order for the maintainance of the truth. And whether men will endure sound doctrine or not, we who preach must be thoroughly furnished with facts and arguments to fortify and render it invulnerable to all the attacks of sophistry. The weapons of truth are often powerless and inefficient, when wielded by feeble and unskillful hands. Whether our pupils take a partial or the entire course, let them be thorough masters of the branches they study. I never wish to see pretenders among our ministers. I do not like to hear men quote Latin and Greek, when further acquaintance may prove them less skilled in those languages than some who studied forty years ago, in the back woods. High pretensions to theological learning, founded on the reading of a few controversial works, without any accurate acquaintance with those who stand as beacon-lights to a pure Christianity, never fail to disgust me. I have no fellowship for the mere smatterer. My experience and observation have convinced me, that the *superficial* scholar is apt to cherish a greater *pride*

of scholarship than most others." Both in Committee and before the Synod, Mr. Ewing, while he eloquently advocated the establishment of the proposed College and the cause of education generally, did most solemnly warn his brethren against trusting in an arm of flesh. So the Puritan commander exhorted his soldiers: "Be sure to trust in God, while you keep your powder dry." Will the sentiment justify a reproachful inference?

In 1840 the College being then without endowment, and sustained by tuition fees alone, labored under some pecuniary embarrassment. On being informed of the fact, Mr. Ewing promptly addressed a letter to the church, which was published in the *Banner of Peace*, pleading for its endowment with a fund of a hundred thousand dollars, and proposing to make a donation of five hundred dollars. See Appendix, E.

It may be proper to observe that the College, being partially endowed, is prospering under the presidency of Rev. Richard Beard, D. D., one of its early alumni, assisted by accomplished professors. Several other Colleges have been established by the Cumberland Presbyterians. Lebanon University, under the presidency of Rev. Thomas C. Anderson, A. M., assisted by three professors and two tutors, is to be endowed with a permanent fund of one hundred thousand dollars, more than two-thirds of which sum having been already obtained. The average number of its pupils, for a few years past, has been about 130. Connected therewith is a Department of Law, under three professors, who rank among the ablest jurists in the State. The number

of students in this Department varies from 50 to 75. The late General Assembly made arrangements for a Theological Department, which is shortly to go into operation. The College of Beverly, Ohio, the College at Dangerfield, Texas, Bethel College, at McLemoresville, West Tenn., and Chapel Hill College, Mo., under the presidency of Rev. Robert D. Morrow, D. D., are all represented as highly prosperous and flourishing. A number of academies and high schools are doing good service in the cause of education. From the zeal and liberality displayed in the establishment of literary institutions of different grades — from the avowed determination of the influential members of the church — it is believed that the time is not distant when the Cumberland Presbyterian ministry will stand second to no other in America. The church at this time sustains nine religious periodicals, six of them are published weekly, and three monthly.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

REVIEW OF DAVIDSON.

His representations of the doctrines of the latter class of men.

THE historian uniformly represents the young men who entered the ministry during the revival of 1800, and who afterwards became the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian church, as decidedly Arminian in sentiment. He says, "McGready and Hodge professed to be Calvinists," while he as unhesitatingly asserts that "Rankin, McGee, and the whole troop of exhorters were as decidedly Arminian."* Under this significant phrase he would comprehend all the young men, whether preachers or exhorters.

McGready and Hodge probably did belong to one or another of the several departments into which the Calvinistic school is divided; or, like too many good men, they may have vacillated between the different departments, uncertain which contained the truth, but taking it for granted that truth was lodged somewhere or somehow in the school itself. But they certainly did not belong to that grade of Calvinists which would make God the efficient cause of sin, array his secret will against his revealed word, destroy man's free agency.

* Dav. Hls., p. 228.

and accountability, put an excuse into the heart of the impenitent sinner, and damn a large portion of our unhappy race, for their sins committed according to the eternal purpose. No indeed! Their lives, their labors, and all that is known of their instructions in public and private, prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt. Nothing need be said of Rankin, who afterwards disgraced himself and the old Presbyterian church, as he would have done any other with which he might have been connected. Still, it is not known that he ever belonged to any other, until he, with several other ministers of the same church, shamefully apostatized and joined the Shakers; not one of them ever belonged to the Cumberland Presbyterian body.

But what of McGee? Why he has been declared "decidedly Arminian." What more need be said of him? Yet when the new Cumberland Presbytery was about to be constituted, strange and unaccountable as his former statement may appear, the same writer unflinchingly says, "McGee was in a pitiable state of indecision, believing that the truth lay somewhere between Calvinism and Arminianism, but unable to frame a system satisfactory to himself."* The two statements, when compared, seem in some manner to conflict. Unless it can be shown that Mr. McGee, from a position "decidedly Arminian," after a few years, fell into this "pitiable state of indecision," plain people will be apt to see a contradiction, and perhaps doubt which statement to believe. And suppose his

* Dav. His., p. 252.

fall could be fairly shown, it would be interesting to be informed how a Presbyterian minister, after having become "decidedly Arminian," should fall into "a pitiable state of indecision." Was it by means of Craighead's clamors for orthodoxy and order, in opposing the revival? or by Balch's ridicule against repentance, faith, and regeneration? or was it by any of Lyle's sermons, three hours long, on the divine purpose? No explanation is offered. All is shrouded in darkness. But the whole mystery is solved, by bringing out the fact that Mr. McGee joined the Cumberland Presbyterians after their separate organization, incurring equally with them the displeasure of the mother church: Hence, the stigma of decided Arminianism cast upon them must, if possible, be made to attach to him also. But to charge him with this in 1803, and be compelled to acknowledge his indecision in 1810, without accounting for so strange a thing, is to make an admission which disproves the charge. And candor will even question the truth of the charge against those who are superciliously styled "the whole troop of exhorters," who had excepted to fatality. This is not the first time that the statements of history have contradicted themselves, having been derived from prejudiced sources.

The more the attentive reader shall examine and compare what is said of the doctrinal sentiments of these men, in different parts of his history, the more will he desire to discover what are Dr. Davidson's real views as well of Calvinism as of Arminianism. These inquiries will naturally arise: what are the lines of demarkation

between the two systems? If they agree in any thing and differ in any thing, what are the points of agreement and what of difference? Now Presbyterians of every class and order unhesitatingly admit that, in Calvinism, there are some doctrines which are not only true, but so acknowledged by Arminians themselves; that there are other doctrines which are confessedly true, but denied by Arminians; and there are other doctrines still which are not only denied by Arminians, but have early and late been subjects of warm discussion among Calvinists themselves. Where, in this controversy of Calvinists among themselves, does our historian stand? A man of his great learning ought to know, and a man of his amiable frankness ought to show his true doctrinal position. He must not be supposed one of those who, when hard pressed by an opponent — no matter whether of the Calvinistic or any other school — is ready to flee from one strong hold after another as he finds each of them indefensible, until he is found to have temporarily occupied them all, but successfully defended none. In whatever bastion of the Calvinistic fortification he has made his own lodgement, this doubtless he feels able to defend.

But still it must be matter of surprise that one of his acuteness of intellect, who understands himself so well, should not be more correct as well as consistent in giving the doctrinal views of others, about whom his fluent pen has divulged so much. The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian church are, by him, generally styled Arminians. Mr. McGready is declared to have been

“a Calvinist of the old school.”* Still it is admitted that his “name was intimately associated with the early history of the Cumberland Presbyterians; and who is still venerated by them as one in sentiment, and the patriarch of their order.”† Are Cumberland Presbyterians, who are denounced as Arminians, one in sentiment with a Calvinist of the old school? Or is there no difference between Calvinists and Arminians? These conflicting statements are calculated, though doubtless not intended, to distract and perplex the reader, and must increase his anxiety to ascertain the *whereabouts* of him who makes them. The nearest approach which he makes to any thing by which his own position may be apparently inferred, is found in the conclusion of his sketch of McGready, as follows: “His orthodoxy is apparent from his clear acknowledgments and vindication of the doctrines of imputation, the federal headship of Christ, election, the agency of the Spirit in the new birth, and the impotency of moral suasion.”‡ He has not shown in what sense these doctrines constitute orthodoxy, nor whether they can be understood in more senses than one; but if these are the true tests of orthodoxy, the world will never cease to wonder how those who adopted the Confession of Faith, with the single exception of fatality, could be reprobated as Arminian or heterodox. The suspicion arises that these tests were intended to bear upon “the New School schism,” rather than “the Cumberland.” However, his own position is still undefined.

* Dav. His., p. 243.

† Ib. p. 259.

‡ Ib. p. 262.

High eulogies are often pronounced on Calvinism, even by those who appear to know but little of the system. Its praises are sweetly sung by those who are more skilled in concealing, than defending its objectionable doctrines. In the social circle, by a skillful elucidation of the doctrines of imputation and the final perseverance of the saints, it can put on an upright, downright, and outright Cumberland dress. And even in the pulpit it can present as perfect a resemblance of Cumberlandism, as any daguerreotypist ever took of the human countenance. Much, however, depends on the skill of the artist. But the fact will not be denied, that very many contend that there is no difference between Old School, and Cumberland Presbyterian doctrines. And not a few of the former stoutly deny that their system at all embraces those doctrines to which the latter so strenuously object: or if it once did, it does not now.

It may not be amiss to give a little attention to one of the eulogies on Calvinism, pronounced by the historian, by way of contrast with the Cumberland Presbyterian Confession of Faith adopted in 1814. His intellectual furnace glows and scintillates as follows :

“ Calvinism is a complete and compact system, and, as in a well-constructed arch, every separate doctrine is a keystone, which cannot be abstracted without endangering the whole. As from the foot we may infer the proportions of a statue, or reproduce a Saurian from its fossil fragments, so each single doctrine of the

Calvinistic scheme naturally and necessarily involves the adoption of all the rest. Forgetful or unconscious of this truth, they (the Cumberland Synod) endeavored, in the altered edition of the Confession and Catechisms, to steer a middle course between Calvinism and Arminianism, (if a middle course there can be ;) rejecting the doctrines of eternal reprobation, limited atonement, and special grace, and maintaining that the Spirit of God operates on the world, or co-extensively with the atonement, so as to leave all men inexcusable.” *

No one, acquainted with the lights and shades of Calvinism, and the various sects into which its votaries are divided and subdivided, can go through the above extract without a smile. It is not, however, intended as an effusion of pleasantry ; but is uttered in solemn earnest, as the meed of praise, due to Calvinism in all truth and verity. It certainly is calculated to excite the humorous propensities of any one, who has made much advancement in theology, and may occasion no little speculation, with regard to the particular grade or degree of Calvinism which is here so highly extolled. It is presumable that the historian, when he hymned these praises, intended them to enure to the honor of his own sect, and expected all the other sects pronouncing *Shibboleth* with any degree of Calvinistic exactitude, to respond in solemn symphony or join in high chorus, each with what gusto he could. And doubtless he would invite all to repose under his “ well-constructed arch,” who can recognize the one predestinarian “ keystone

* Davidson's History, page 256.

which cannot be abstracted without endangering the whole," and he might allow any one to worship before his "statue" who is willing to bow submissively at its "foot."

[The truth is, it requires a wiser man than Solomon to tell what Calvinism really is. Few can agree in what it ought to be. Learned doctors of the system, war against, and worry each other about it, crying lo, here ! lo, there ! and lo, any where, except with their opponents. No house is more divided against itself ; no kingdom more vexed and torn by rebellions and usurpations. It would be superfluous to refer to the various contests of Calvinism, since the time of Augustine, or even during the last half century. Very lately Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, and Professor Park, of Andover, were in close conflict, while Dr. Lord, of Dartmouth College, volunteered a pamphlet zealously setting forth his opinions. When the honest historian dreams that "each single doctrine of the Calvinistic scheme naturally and necessarily involves the adoption of all the rest," he does but imagine vain things. Let him try the experiment, and see how many individuals he can find, who, being accustomed to think for themselves and capable of investigating the subject, shall agree with him in the number, form, and magnitude of those notable keystones which compose his "well-constructed arch." Like some other incongruities which held their place for a time, the system has been so battered, tattered, and torn in pieces, that it would be utterly impossible to "reproduce a Saurian from its fossil

fragments," strewed by Calvinistic gladiators, over the whole arena of theological discussion.

While Calvinism embodies certain precious doctrines which ever have been, and ever will be, dear to pious hearts ; it comprises also what some regard as palpable absurdities. For the sake of the former, many well meaning persons endure the latter with a patience and composure worthy of a better cause. All acknowledge that there is much good in the system ; and the only controversy is, with regard to the nature and extent of the evil. Hence its votaries seem to have racked their inventions incessantly to find out what palliatives could be applied to the evils of the system ; and it has undergone so many modifications, that, in speaking of a Calvinist, no man can tell what he does believe, further than that predestination may be the polar star of his creed : with the eyes of Argus or the lynx it is impossible to discern any other keystone in the whole arch.

It is unnecessary to notice all the various questions that have arrayed Calvinists in fierce strife among themselves. Among the most prominent are the few which follow : 1. Whether God is the efficient cause of moral evil, or the real author of sin ?* 2. Whether his introduction

* The affirmative of this question is fairly and logically deducible from premises, unequivocally laid down in their Confession of Faith. For when it is stated that God hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass — it being admitted that sin has come to pass — it will inevitably follow that God hath fore-ordained sin. And since God is the efficient cause of whatever he eternally purposed and fore-ordained, there is no escape from the conclusion, that God is the efficient cause or author of sin. While some Calvinists, admitting the premises, strive

of sin is for the greatest good? 3. Whether man is a free agent, having the power of choice? * 4. Whether

hard to evade the conclusion; others, gifted with more candor or more logical acumen, acknowledge the whole to be legitimate and indisputable. A weekly periodical, the Boston Telegraph, speaking of the charge, that Calvinism makes God the author of sin, discourses as follows :

"The word author is sometimes used to mean efficient cause. Now I am willing to admit that those scriptures which teach that God has decreed the sinful conduct of men, do imply, that he is the *efficient cause* of moral evil. For his own glory and the greatest good he said, let there be sin, and there was sin !!!" See Dr. Fiske's Cal. Con. page 94.

But the admission, that God is the efficient cause of moral evil or the real author of sin, does by no means arrest the family controversy. It is readily seen that to judge of the character of the author by his work or to estimate the efficient cause by the effects produced — as a tree is known by its fruit or a fountain by its streams — would seem to deny the holiness of the divine character. Hence has arisen the second question, above stated, which has been boldly affirmed by some and as strenuously denied by others: Whether his introduction of sin is for the greatest good? The affirmants allege, that in consequence of sin, God provided the atonement which brings the highest glory to his name: forgetting that it is wrong to do evil that good may come, and it is impossible that a Being who cannot lie, should resort to unholy means for the accomplishment of holy ends.

* Dr. Taylor and numerous followers of the New Divinity are understood to maintain that the agency of man is not only free but independent; and that his mind originates thought and volition. This is entirely at antipodes with another Calvinistic theory of the periodical last quoted, given by Dr. Fiske, page 95, as follows: "If any man affirms that man really chooses, and that his acts of will are caused by his own free, voluntary and efficient mind, then he is no Calvinist." Other Calvinists contend that these and similar doctrines "confound right and wrong, and subvert all moral distinctions;" that if carried out in their legitimate consequences, they would lead to Universalism, Deism or Atheism. Let a single sorites be applied to

the atonement and the operations of the Spirit of God are limited to the elect only? 5. Whether men have

the dogma of Calvinism, to which the Cumberland Presbyterians have all along objected, supposing it to contain the idea of *fatality*.

If God hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, he hath fore-ordained all the temptations, volitions and actions of men;

If God hath fore-ordained all the temptations, volitions and actions of men, men must be by fatal necessity subjected to their control;

If men are by fatal necessity subject to the control of temptations, volitions and actions, fore-ordained by God, men are not free, accountable agents;

If not free, accountable agents, they are neither guilty nor innocent;

If neither guilty nor innocent, they have no moral character;

If they have no moral character, they are incapable of either sin or holiness;

If they are incapable of either sin or holiness, they are not fit subjects for either rewards or punishments;

If they are not fit subjects for either rewards or punishments, the Bible is false, and revealed religion a fable;

If the Bible is false, and revealed religion a fable, it is a vain thing to serve the God of revelation.

This is what logicians call the "*argumentum ad absurdum*," or the reasoning from a disputed premise to show their absurdity; and indeed it does show that this dogma of Calvinism, carried out in its legitimate consequences, inevitably leads to the vilest infidelity. It is therefore false. But when reversed into what may be termed an "*argumentum ad verum*," or the reasoning from an acknowledged premise to the truth, it utterly demolishes the dogma in question. Let us begin with the acknowledged truth that it is not a vain thing to serve the God of revelation, as in the following:

If it is not a vain thing to serve the God of revelation, the Bible is true, and revealed religion no fable;

If the Bible is true, and revealed religion no fable, men are fit subjects for either rewards or punishments;

If men are fit subjects for either rewards or punishments, they are capable of either sin or holiness;

natural ability to repent, believe and obey the gospel? 6. Whether all sin consists in moral exercise? 7. Whether men are bound to convert themselves? These are a few of the many controverted questions among acknowledged Calvinists. Now how a learned and pious man, in the middle of the nineteenth century, can, in view of so many antagonisms, talk of a "complete and compact system," and assert that "each single doctrine of the Calvinistic scheme naturally and necessarily involves the adoption of all the rest," is astonishing and inexplicable.

Certainly the Cumberland Presbyterians were "forgetful or unconscious of *this truth*"—that is the brilliant portraiture, already given, of Calvinism—and with the Bible in their hands, it is probable they will ever remain so. They could not assent to the doctrine of eternal predestination which they thought equivalent to *fatality*, dishonoring to a holy God and ruinous to

If they are capable of either sin or holiness, they have moral character;

If they have moral character, they are either guilty or innocent;

If they are either guilty or innocent, they are free, accountable agents;

If they are free, accountable agents, they are not by fatal necessity subjected to the control of temptations, volitions and actions, fore-ordained by God;

If they are not by fatal necessity subjected to the control of temptations, volitions and actions, fore-ordained by God, God hath not fore-ordained them;

If God hath not fore-ordained all the temptations, volitions and actions of men, he hath not fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

precious souls. Their "bolder step" consisted in thinking for themselves, obeying the dictates of their own consciences, reading and interpreting the scriptures according to the light and grace vouchsafed to their prayers and investigations, and rejecting a time-honored doctrine which appeared to them no less than an odious absurdity, sustained only by a few venerable advocates and a false-named human philosophy. Therefore they did adopt for themselves, and publish to the world an "altered edition of the Confession and Catechism," "rejecting the doctrines of eternal reprobation,* limited atonement," † "and maintaining that the Spirit of God

* Nothing can be found in the Bible, when fairly interpreted, to sustain so vile a caricature of the God of love; and it is matter of profound astonishment and wonder that men professing godliness should ever conceive, especially that any church should really adopt, so great a blasphemy against the Holy One.

† This doctrine was rejected, because it is plainly and palpably contradicted by the word of God. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. ii, 5, 6. "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii, 2. See also Heb. ii, 9, and numerous other passages.

The historian adds to these rejected doctrines, that of *special grace*. If he means any special grace whereby "some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death," he is right: they do reject this doctrine. But if he means the grace of God vouchsafed to the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit," he is entirely wrong: they acknowledge this. The Cumberland Presbyterians believe the people of God enjoy his special grace in their pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification and perseverance unto eternal life.

operates on the world, or co-extensively with the atonement, so as to leave all men inexcusable."

And was it not their right thus to do? Who has the effrontery to question the right and privilege of a body of Christians to profess their faith and publish a summary of their doctrines? The Pope thought Luther's a bold step. So thought the Synod of Kentucky with regard to the rejection of a doctrine which some profess, but none can prove to be true. But the world has discovered that Popes and Synods are not infallible.

With great respect and reverence for the Presbyterian church, her enlightened zeal and laudable efforts in behalf of missions, education, and practical piety — abounding as she seems in almost every good word and work — the Cumberland Presbyterians cannot subscribe to a doctrine which employs God's sovereignty in bringing to pass all unrighteousness, and subjects man's agency to absolute decrees, equivalent to the laws of fate. And let it not be thought unpardonable presumption to differ in one important respect, from those worthies who lived in the twilight of the reformation, whose opinions have been stereotyped and handed down to posterity, in their otherwise excellent writings and in Confessions of Faith. Having just emerged from a long night of intellectual and spiritual darkness — during which magic instead of physics, alchemy instead of chemistry, astrology instead of astronomy, papal superstition instead of the religion of the Bible, swayed more or less the minds of the learned in Christendom — it is not strange that the mental vision of those great and good men should have been rather

too beclouded to discern and expel every absurdity from their system, otherwise scriptural. It is rather surprising that so little alloy is found in union with the golden mass which, at the time and under the circumstances, they dug from the almost unexplored mine of revealed truth.

While Cumberland Presbyterians contend that truth is ever the same, and not, like the human sciences, susceptible of improvements, since no new revelation is expected, they do not suppose that human expounders have arrived at perfection in scriptural exegesis and systematic theology. Christians should never feel bound to tread servilely in the track of the masters of former centuries; nor should they adopt the sentiments of men, however wise and good, further than these are sustained by the word of God. It is Popery, and not Protestantism which blindly believes what the fathers teach, excluding investigation. It is the church of Rome which makes the ghostly confessor the keeper of men's consciences, while the Church of Christ acknowledges no infallible expounders of the revealed word. Hence, all the censures and all the sophisms which Old School Presbyterians may choose to apply to that "bolder step" — the adoption of an altered Confession of Faith — will fall with equal force and heaviness on Luther, Calvin, Knox, and other Reformers.

A degree of modesty would become those who complain of the rejection of eternal predestination, a doctrine which they can never defend, and seldom undertake to maintain in these latter days. And were

that doctrine now expounded and enforced in their churches as fully and frequently as it was fifty years ago, it is believed they would be left with but very few hearers. This must be obvious to all observers, since Bible and Tract societies have so widely diffused their benign blessing; and revivals of religion have prompted to the more general reading of the scriptures, there can be found but few plain, Bible readers who do not reject the doctrine of eternal predestination, as unsound, unscriptural, and revolting to pious hearts.

South and west of New England, the Presbyterians have enjoyed advantages for usefulness and church extension, far superior to all other denominations in the United States. The common prejudices against a union of Church and State did not affect them as they did the Episcopalians. Their form of government being in the strictest harmony with the republican institutions of the country, they were rightly considered as identified with its true interests. They have, for the most part, maintained a body of pious, talented, and learned clergy. Their people generally have been remarkable for their strictness in the support of family religion, the pious training of children, the observance of the Sabbath, and all the institutions of the gospel. In sobriety, morality, and all the virtues necessary to good citizenship and usefulness to society, they are scarcely excelled by any other.

With all these advantages and the current of public sentiment strongly in their favor, there was a time when they might have been expected to build up an interest

and an influence much more extensive and powerful than all the other denominations put together, which then scarcely had a name, but few places of worship, and were struggling to obtain a foothold. Why has not our beloved country realized this hope of Presbyterian promise? Why have the Baptists and Methodists, who till lately had comparatively but few learned ministers, outstripped them so remarkably in their amount of influence acquired, and church extension accomplished? * But one answer can be given, and impartial investigation will sustain no other: the Presbyterians have all along maintained — however much they may have endeavored to palliate or conceal — the doctrine of eternal predestination. While the Methodists have uniformly rejected this doctrine, as spurious and revolting to common

* A learned Baptist editor in Kentucky, lately placed this result to the account of the Presbyterian practice of infant baptism, and sagely concluded that the days of the Presbyterian church in that State were numbered, and she was verging to her final extinction. But he is as much mistaken in his designation of the cause, as he is in his prediction. If, when the Cumberland Presbyterians separated, from the old church, the clergy of the latter had been as illiterate as were those of the old Baptist church, when those now called Missionary Baptists modified certain doctrines and set up for themselves, the results in both the old churches might have been the same, as like causes produce like effects. Surely infant baptism had nothing to do with the downward course of the old Baptist church. Doubtless the cause was their Antinomian or predestinarian doctrine without sufficient learning to make it plausible. There is respectable learning among the Presbyterian clergy, and though they have to carry the grievous weight of their predestinarian doctrine, their church shows no very decided evidences of speedy extinction. Besides, that church may abandon error, as that editor's and the writer's have done.

sense ; the Baptists at the west generally, are understood to have abandoned it, about thirty or forty years ago. It is ardently hoped and as confidently predicted, that the piety and wisdom of the mother church will gain that victory over her pride of authority, which will enable and impel her to abandon an error which is consuming her strength, and destroying her usefulness.

CHAPTER XXIX.

REVIEW OF DAVIDSON.

His unqualified censures of the revival of 1800, which gave birth to the Cumberland Presbyterian church, confounding the true friends and promoters of that glorious work, with the Stoneites or New Lights, the abettors of acknowledged heresy.

ALL may have noticed something of the earth's tremors and the storm's rage ; but comparatively few have witnessed those " earthquakes which swallow, and tempests which sweep towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep." It is just so with party spirit : all have seen enough to deprecate it as an evil ; but by no means have all been exposed to its violence and called to mourn over its desolations. And when it enters the church, it is sometimes not less remorseless in its character, nor less mischievous in its consequences, than elsewhere. However painful may be this reflection, ecclesiastical history confirms its justness, by those bitter contentions and boisterous commotions which have disturbed and distracted the church militant, in different ages and countries. The truth is, depraved human nature is the same every where, its violence of passion the same, except when held in check by circumstances, restrained by the grace of God or controlled for good by his overruling providence. Ever since angels fell, there has

been waged a continual warfare of sin against holiness, darkness against light, the powers of hell against the God of heaven. The church, built upon the rock Christ Jesus, is dear to him as the apple of his eye ; * and his people, being workers together with him, shall ultimately prevail against the mighty. The arch enemy, aware of this, and knowing his time is short, seeks as far as possible to compensate for his inevitable destruction, by the gratification of his malice in annoying the saints. If he can substitute error for truth, formalism for spirituality, cold and heartless speculations for pure and undefiled religion, it is the highest achievement permitted to his prowess. He knows he has for a season power to bruise but not break, to deceive but not destroy, to draw aside from duty but not drag down to the pit. And when he can array ministers and members of the church in unholy strife among themselves, more or less of his own work is performed by pious hands, and the Saviour wounded in the house of his friends. Or if, during a revival of religion, when the Spirit of God is striving with the hearts of the people, the enemy can stir up the self deceived, the hypocrite, and the formalist to join in opposition with the notorious worldling and professed infidel, he doubtless promises large accessions to his kingdom, from the souls lost through such instrumentalities.

These reflections naturally occur, on considering the causes and the character of that opposition to the revival of 1800, which was manifested by so many Presbyterian

* Zech. ii, 8.

ministers, and the warfare which has been waged from the pulpit and the press, for so long a term of years, against its friends and favorers.* The enemy of souls seems to have stirred up, in the church and throughout the country, a party spirit, as uncomely in its character as desolating in its effects; which will be a subject of regret to pious hearts, while time shall last. All who are acquainted with the history of the Presbyterian Church, in Britain and America, her piety, zeal, labors, sacrifices and sufferings in behalf of truth and holiness, will wonder how any considerable number of the ministers of that denomination could array themselves in opposition to a revival of religion. These inquiries will naturally arise in their minds: Have not Presbyterians, from their origin, zealously favored revivals? Do they not owe to these their existence as a church? To promote them, have they not maintained a pious and learned ministry? For the sake of these, are they not very strict in maintaining family religion, and in training up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? In aid of these, by a general diffusion of religious and useful knowledge, have they not distinguished their liberality in support of schools, colleges, and theological seminaries? To foster these, are they not sustaining, at great expense, their domestic and foreign missions? And on these do they not rely for the conversion of the world? While all intelligent men will answer these questions in the affirmative, they will

* The reader is particularly requested here, to read Mr. McGready's Narrative of this Revival, in Appendix, marked F.

still be at a loss to know, how any consistent Presbyterian could oppose a true revival! And when its genuineness is proved, by fairly distinguishing it from the excitement under Stone, Marshall, &c., they will conclude, either that its opposers were not consistent Presbyterians, or that they had suffered themselves to be deceived with regard to the true character of the work. But when they shall have become convinced that the first opposers were not, and that they deceived others who were, orthodox Presbyterians, thereby inducing them to join in unholy opposition; as lovers of truth and justice, they will be prepared to stamp, with due reprehension, the ungenerous attempt, often and continually made, to confound the revival in which the Cumberland Presbyterians had their origin, with another excitement from which sprung "the New Light schism." And when honest men, desirous of knowing the truth, have advanced thus far, they must see, notwithstanding the acts of Kentucky Synod — as the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has acknowledged — that the Cumberland Presbyterians have "*received great ecclesiastical wrong.*"*

For the purpose of aiding those who sincerely desire to know the truth on this subject, it will be proper to show:

1. That the revival of 1800, so called, was a genuine work of God.

2. That some of the ministers opposing it were not consistent Presbyterians; or they were deceived respecting its character.

* Rev. Dr. Ely, of Philadelphia.

3. That it is to be distinguished from the work which resulted in "the New Light schism," so called.

4. That this confounding of the two different works probably had much influence on the proceedings of Kentucky Synod, and the sanction of the General Assembly.

1. The revival of 1800, so called, was a genuine work of God. Truth is the instrument, employed by the Spirit of God, for the accomplishment of a work of grace. Hence our blessed Saviour, praying to his Father for the Apostles, says: "Sanctify them through thy truth." * In judging of the character of a revival, it is important to know, what were the doctrines preached, relied on, and blessed to the production of so glorious a result. On this point, the testimony of Mr. McGready is full and satisfactory. He says: "The doctrines of *Regeneration*, Faith and Repentance, which I uniformly preached, seemed to call the attention of the people to a serious inquiry." There never was, and never will be, a genuine work of God, where these precious doctrines are omitted, or do not occupy a prominent place in the preaching producing it.

An evidence of the genuineness of this awakening may also be taken, from Mr. McGready's account of the exercises of mind among its subjects, whether they were carnal, self-deceived, formal members of the church, or had hitherto lived as infidels and impotent sinners.

What Mr. McGready has testified, concerning those who professed religion in this revival, will afford a very

*John xvii, 17.

good criterion of its genuineness. His statement is, "that among the great numbers in the country that professed to obtain religion, I scarcely know an instance of any that gave a comfortable ground of hope to the people of God, that they had religion, and have been admitted to the privileges of the church, that have, in any degree, disgraced their profession, or given us any ground to doubt their religion." If the tree may be known by the fruit it bears, and the character of the school by the deportment of its scholars; surely, the genuineness of a work of grace may be tested by the unwavering faith and consistent lives of its subjects. Since the doctrines, instrumentally producing the revival, were genuine; since the exercises of persons, during their transformation from darkness to light, were scriptural; and since the lives of its subjects were holy; the fair conclusion is, that the revival itself was a genuine, scriptural and holy work.

Dr. George Baxter, of Virginia, after visiting Kentucky in 1801, spending a month in attendance on the meetings and in intercourse with the leading clergy, communicated to his friend, Dr. Archibald Alexander, the results of his observations on the revival. His letter being published, his favorable views of the revival were controverted. This drew from him a warm defence. And notwithstanding Dr. Davidson, in a note, informs his readers that Dr. Baxter afterwards changed his opinion, and, finding the New York Evangelist re-publishing his letter in support of new measures, if he had lived, would have published an

explanation of his views, the following will show some of his views at the time, before party spirit had reached its height :

“ On my way to Kentucky,” says Mr. Baxter, “ I was informed by settlers on the road, that the character of *Kentucky travelers* was entirely changed : and that they were now as remarkable for sobriety as they had formerly been for dissoluteness and immorality. And indeed I found Kentucky, to appearances, *the most moral place* I had ever seen. A profane expression was hardly ever heard. A religious awe seemed to pervade the whole country ; and some deistical characters had confessed, that from whatever cause the revival might proceed, it made the people better. Its influence was not less visible in promoting a *friendly temper* among the people. . . . Some neighborhoods visited by the revival were formerly notorious for private animosities and contentions ; and many petty lawsuits had commenced on that ground. When the parties in these quarrels were impressed with religion, the first thing was to send for their antagonists, and it was often very affecting to see their meeting. They had both seen their faults, and both contended they ought to make the acknowledgments, until at last they were obliged to request one another to forbear all mention of the past, and to receive each other as friends and brothers for the future.” *

The above contains a positive, definite statement of matters of fact. The extract bears testimony in favor

* Quoted by Dr. Davidson from West. Miss. Mag.

of the revival, and is indisputably true. No one can possibly suppose the author ever would have denied one particle of what he had so positively and truthfully asserted; or that he could, if he had lived, by any means nullify or fritter away what he had testified to the genuineness of the revival. And what could he have explained? Certainly nothing which could present his statement of facts in any different light, but only some matters of opinion wherein his mind had changed. And what might these be? There is no way of conjecturing, except by looking at the circumstances in his case. And what are these? He had never been connected with either of the Cumberland Presbyteries, nor with the Synod of Kentucky. He had never opposed the revival, nor stirred up others to oppose it. He had not indulged in prejudice, nor imbibed party spirit. He had not seen younger and less learned men surpass him in useful labors, and rise above him in the affections of the people, nor had his clerical pride been wounded and his ambition curbed. He had neither acted in, nor sanctioned, any unconstitutional proceedings of a Commission of Synod; and consequently the necessities of his case required no effort for justification, before the world, by confounding the revival of 1800, so called, under Mr. McGready's preaching, with a later work under the preaching of Stone, Marshall, and "the New Lights." Hence it is probable — nay, it is almost certain — if Dr. Baxter had lived to explain, that he would have made the true distinction, and awarded that justice which so many of

his brethren have long withheld. And that he did not live to explain, if this inference be correct, no people on earth have so much reason to lament as the Cumberland Presbyterians.

It will be remembered that the venerable Dr. Rice, after attending a sacramental meeting in the region where the revival was in progress, and witnessing its genuine character, recommended that the pious and intelligent young men should be licensed, as catechists and traveling exhorters, in order that the destitutions of the country might be better supplied. This was in October, 1801. The revival had commenced under the preaching of Mr. McGready, in May, 1797. Dr. Rice must have been aware of the shameful conduct of Balch, the opposition of Craighead, Bowman, Donnell, and Templin; he must have been acquainted with the true history and character of a revival which had now been in progress nearly four years and a half, within the bounds of his own Presbytery; and notwithstanding all this, he recommended the very measure which proved to be most successful in fostering and carrying on the gracious work. This he never could have done, in behalf of a spurious revival. And though it has been said that he afterwards changed his mind and opposed, his opposition never partook of the character of some others; nor can it be shown that he ever was hostile to this revival, when fairly distinguished from that of Stone, Marshall, and the New Lights. And it is proper to notice his sentiments, after party spirit had done its very worst; after opposition had exhausted its utmost

strength; after the Commission of Kentucky Synod had perpetrated its unconstitutional acts; after justification had been sought for those acts by confounding the two works, differing in time and place; after the good man's ears had been assailed with evil reports, and his eyes had seen, in Upper Kentucky, things which he condemned. Even as late as 1808, he did not condemn as spurious that revival, to the promotion and propagation of which, his wise counsels had so essentially contributed. For at this time he addressed the Presbyterians of Kentucky on the subject, as follows:—

“That we had *a revival of the spirit and power of Christianity* amongst us, I did, do, and ever shall believe, until I see evidence to the contrary, which I have not yet seen; but we have sadly mismanaged it; we have dashed it down, and broken it in pieces. Though I hope *a number will have reason to bless God for it to all eternity*, yet we have not acted as wise master-builders, who have no need to be ashamed.”*

These stubborn truths from the pen of the father of the Presbyterian church in Kentucky, must have called up blushes on the cheeks of all the opposers; as much of the epistle from which it is extracted is calculated to rebuke the disorders of the New Lights, and all other enthusiasts. But of the revival itself, he says, “*we have dashed it down, and broken it in pieces.*” Yes: the Commission of Synod had prohibited nearly all the young men, whether licensed or ordained, whose labors had been so signally blessed to its promotion, “from

* Bishop's Mem. of Dr. Rice, pp. 367, 369.

exhorting, preaching, and administering ordinances," and that, too, without any charge of heresy or immorality. And notwithstanding the General Assembly had decided that the insisting on the young men's re-examination, the suspension of the young men, licensed and ordained ministers, without process, and the suspension of two old ministers for resisting the re-examination, were "at least of questionable regularity," the Synod of Kentucky had, only a short time before, professedly reviewed their irregular proceedings, re-affirmed all their decisions, denied that the young preachers had been suspended at all, *in a technical sense*, or that the Commission had dealt with them without process. In view of the facts and records in the case, the Synod of Kentucky had thus obstinately re-judged their own acts, and somewhat enigmatically decided all in their own favor. Well might Dr. Rice, in the tenderness of his heart, say, "*We have not acted as wise master-builders, who have no need to be ashamed.*"

Notwithstanding his too great reliance on the views and statements of his party, Dr. Davidson, with his usual candor, speaks of the revival as follows: "That it was attended by beneficial consequences, especially during the earlier stages of its progress,* is undeniable." Again he says, : "Besides numerous genuine conversions doubtless occurring through the whole course of the revival, its commencement was marked with a splendor of success that dazzled while it enchanted

* That may be before its opponents confounded it with the New Light extravagances and disorders.

the observer.”* That there did appear some errors, extravagances, and instances of improper conduct, which were, ever will be, and ever ought to be, subjects of deep regret to all the true friends of the revival; and that these prevailed to some extent, even in the Green River and Cumberland countries, must be admitted. But it cannot be shown that the leaders in this work ever cherished these errors and extravagances, or made them the evidences of a change of heart, or of true religion. If these false tests were admitted any where as evidences of piety, it must have been among the New Lights of upper Kentucky. This has been charged against them, and may be true. It is certain that the evils complained of prevailed to a much greater extent where these people operated, than in lower Kentucky and Tennessee. The candid and impartial statement of the General Assembly of 1804, in a Narrative of the State of Religion, will confirm the views here given.

“Although through the subtlety of the adversary of souls, and the influence of human frailty, some errors, extravagances, and instances of reproachful behavior, have taken place, which the Assembly do sincerely regret, and most unequivocally disapprove and condemn; yet are they happy to learn, and it is a sacred duty which they owe to the churches to announce that, notwithstanding the malignity with which the enemies of religion have studied to misrepresent, and rejoiced to exaggerate these undesirable events, they are chiefly

* Dav. His., p. 185.

confined to one district of no great extent; and they are certainly very rare, considering the immense region through which this work has prevailed, and the vast variety of characters who have been its subjects." The "*one district of no great extent*," to which the disorders are said to have been "*chiefly confined*," would seem accurately enough to designate upper Kentucky, where at the time Stone, Marshall, and the New Lights bore sway: but by no means would properly apply to the Green River and Cumberland countries, through both of which the revival had extended, by a blessing on the labors of Ewing, Anderson, King, McLean, Porter, Foster, Calhoun, and other fathers of the Cumberland Presbyterian church.

It is true Dr. Davidson in his history has devoted an entire chapter of twenty-seven pages, to the "extravagances and disorders attending the revival," in which he has exhibited scenes and incidents sufficiently disgusting to satisfy any lover of the marvelous with a depraved taste. It is true he has received a very brotherly correction and wholesome rebuke, through the religious papers, from Rev. Dr. Cleland, of Kentucky, who advises the correction of errors and the omission of disgusting scenes in his next edition. But these errors and representations, remaining uncorrected and unatoned for, so far as is known, it may be proper to give them a passing notice, and inquire from what sources they were derived.

Much that is painful to pious hearts is derived from one Richard McNemar, of the State of Ohio, a noted

errorist and wild enthusiast, who was originally and for many years a Presbyterian minister. He imbibed the absurd views of Stone, Marshall, and the New Lights, disowned the authority of the Presbyterians, united in constituting the Springfield Presbytery, and after its dissolution, with about forty of his parishioners, joined the Shakers. He now published his account of the Kentucky revival and its attainment of perfection in Shakerism. He seems to represent conversion as the putting forth of the bud, and Shakerism as the full blossom. By assimilating certain incidents of the revival in which he had been engaged with Shaker usages — the friends of the awakening in lower Kentucky and Tennessee never had any connection with, or fellowship for him or his party — he probably expected to win some of its subjects over to Shakerism. His book is too destitute of literary merit and full of fanatical conceits to afford to the tolerably *decent* infidel or enemy to revivals, much food for rancor or ridicule against religion. But notwithstanding the historian manifestly discredits, and warns his readers against his testimony* on some important points; in his chapter, showing the “extravagances and disorders of the revival,” he quotes or refers to the statements of this same Richard McNemar, more than twenty times. The witness who cannot be credited on some points, is not to be believed on others: the Shaker testimony against the revival is therefore disposed of, and set aside. It is strange that an honest man should have thought of introducing it.

* *Dev. His.*, Note on p. 137.

The most formidable witness against the revival is Rev. John Lyle, who kept a private diary during the height of the great revival of 1801, 1802, and 1803, noting all the incidents that occurred at sacramental and camp-meetings during that period. Mr. Lyle was doubtless a good man. But good men are liable to be misled by prejudice ; and if this was the case with him, he was only in the same category with several others at that period, who were probably as good as he, and much more learned and talented. It is difficult to say, how far even good men, of an obstinate disposition, may be misled by prejudice and party spirit.

Mr. Lyle seems to have been placed in a position to imbibe as much of the rancor of party spirit, as a mind, so pure as his, could entertain. He was regarded in the Green river country, as obstinately opposed to the revival ; but his opposition did not bear the marks of selfishness, wounded pride or disappointed ambition which seemed to characterize that of some others. After having witnessed for several years the disorders which were countenanced, and received as evidences of piety, by Stone, Marshall, and the New Lights, and feeling all the repugnance which the doctrinal errors of these men were calculated to inspire ; he was appointed by Synod, in 1805, to ride *two months* in the bounds of the Cumberland Presbytery.* He was doubtless aware

* The reasons for appointing Mr. Lyle to ride two months in the Cumberland Presbytery, so short a time before the meeting of the Commission of Kentucky Synod, for the purpose of investigating the affairs of the said Presbytery, have not been divulged. Some facts in his case appear significant. He was a man of moderate talents,

of all that had been said and done in opposition to the revival, by Craighead, Balch, Bowman and others ; and may have thought these men the only friends of truth and righteousness in that part of the country. Two months in Cumberland Presbytery, comprising southern Kentucky, and Tennessee, it must be acknowledged, was too short a time to enable even an unprejudiced man to distinguish between the doctrinal errors which he had left behind, and either of the opposing parties among whom he had come. Besides, Dr. Craighead, who, from the first had bitterly opposed the revival and the Cumberland Presbyterians, had not yet developed his Pelagian sentiments. He up to this time had assumed to be the champion of orthodoxy and order in his Presbytery, and had been called to the pastoral charge of the so called anti-revival or orthodox party of the Shiloh congregation, after they had closed the church doors against their former pastor, who favored the revival.* And Mr. Lyle, though honest and even obstinate in pursuit of what he deemed right, was one of those whom, the historian says, certain persons

had his weaknesses, and was occasionally betrayed into too passionate warmth, as his best friends admit. He had betrayed this warmth in opposition to the work in upper Kentucky, as his Diaries show. He might be expected to join in the opposition of Craighead and his party. He was a suitable person to prepare matters for the said Commission. How far his preparations served that body in their proceedings is not known. It is true that some persons during his two months' tour regarded him as a spy.

* This party, having been censured for their violent conduct by Presbytery, withdrew, formed a distinct society, and called Craighead as their pastor.

affected to ridicule as men of small intellects, eclipsed by so great a luminary as Dr. Craighead.* If Mr. Lyle had spent two months in the Cumberland Presbytery, before the errors and disorders of Stone, Marshall, the New Lights, and those who afterwards formed the Springfield Presbytery, some of whom joined the Shakers, had appeared — greatly to the annoyance of all sound Presbyterians as well as to the grief of all true friends of the revival—it is probable that he never would have identified himself with the party, opposing the revival. Or if he had come with a mind unbiased, less under the influence of Craighead and his party, and associated more with McGready, Hodge, McGee, Ewing, and others of like spirit; it is believed that this good man might have discerned the true state of things, the real character of the opposing parties, and made such representations to the Commission, as would have prevented those egregious blunders which caused the separation. But whatsoever things to us are inscrutable, are overruled by wisdom infinite for good. “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.”† The separation, in consequence of the revival of 1800, has done for the cause of vital godliness, the same which the separation, growing out of the awakening of 1740, had so signally accomplished.

Mr. Lyle’s Diaries are to the historian a source of high gratulation. In the preface of his work, he calls them “an invaluable document,” “the precious

* *Dev. His.*, p. 268.

† *Psalms lxxvi*, 10.

manuscript," saw them "at a glance to be of inestimable importance;" and in enumerating his labors, travels and personal conversations, for the production of a work which "is the fruit of nine years' laborious research," comparing himself to Horace, Scott, Allison and Froissart, he advertises his readers that "he has enjoyed facilities, providentially put in his way, of no ordinary value:" evidently meaning these Diaries. For in the next sentence he says, they "were just on the point of being committed to the flames as waste paper, when they fell into the author's hands." These Diaries contain about such details as might be expected from an honest but prejudiced individual, who, having identified himself with a party, was particularly anxious to note down among other things, all that would serve to justify the side he had taken. They are only valuable for the light they throw on their author's subsequent course.

But is the use made of these Diaries by the historian duly authorized? He found in or attached to the contents the following:

"The foregoing short sketches were written hastily for private use; and should I die before I destroy them, I would not allow my friends to hand them about, or any one to use them, except some judicious friend might make an extract of those few particulars which might be useful in writing a history of the progress of religion in Kentucky." *

* The perusal of this paragraph will naturally suggest to the attentive and candid reader, the following questions and answers: *Question:* How were the sketches written? *Answer:* Hastily, and probably

The historian has made a very abundant use of these Diaries or sketches, and has derived from thence, and from the book of McNemar, the Shaker, almost all that is odious and derogatory to the revival, in his chapter devoted to its "Extravagances and Disorders." Besides numerous quotations, statements, and references, in various other parts of his work, he has, in this single chapter, made one hundred and forty-eight references to Mr. Lyle, as his authority. This is a rather liberal use of the privilege, to "make an extract of those few particulars which might be useful in writing the history

without much reflection? *Q.* For what purpose? *A.* For private use. *Q.* What did the writer intend to do with them? *A.* To destroy them before his death. *Q.* Why does he say, "if I die before I destroy them?" *A.* Because he knew death might come upon him, before he should do what he intended. *Q.* But should he leave them undestroyed, what then? *A.* He would not allow his friends to hand them about, or any one to use them, except a judicious friend. *Q.* What might he do? *A.* Make an extract. *Q.* Of what? *A.* Of a few particulars. *Q.* For what purpose? *A.* To show the progress of religion in Kentucky. *Q.* But might he not make many extracts and statements of particulars, referring to the sketches for his authority? *A.* No, only one extract of those few particulars, which show the progress of religion in Kentucky. *Q.* But why did the writer limit to a single extract of only a few particulars? *A.* Because he well knew the sketches contained but a few particulars, such as he allowed to be used. *Q.* What else did they contain? *A.* Much of a censorious character, written when party spirit was at its height, of which the writer in his cooler moments had become thoroughly ashamed, and intended to destroy. *Q.* Did he intend, if he died before he destroyed the manuscript, to forbid the use of all these censorious details to a writer of the history of the progress of religion in Kentucky? *A.* The very nature and language of his prohibition, as well as of the censorious details themselves, incontestibly prove that he did.

of the progress of religion in Kentucky." Whoever attentively reads this chapter, and some succeeding ones, will find ample reasons for the conclusion, that the use made of Lyle's Diaries, and the Shaker's book, was for the purpose of casting an amount of odium upon the revival of 1800, at least sufficient to justify the Synod's intolerable blunders and tyrannical proceedings against the Cumberland Presbyterians. For while it is admitted that the party of Stone, Marshal, and the New Lights, had dwindled to a very small remnant, and was finally "merged in the all-embracing vortex of Campbelism;" * it was also well known that the so called "Cumberland Schism" had, by the blessing of God on their self-sacrificing labors and their scriptural doctrines, grown to be a great people, establishing numerous schools and colleges, and bidding fair to out-number any other branch of the Presbyterian family. And since the Synod's acts, with the pamphlets and publications of various kinds, had not impeded their unparalleled progress, it may have been supposed that the Shaker's book, originally designed by its author to proselyte from the New Lights, and Lyle's Diaries, written when party spirit was at its height, might be pressed into good service. Hence the joy at the discovery of the "precious MS.," "the invaluable document," &c.

But this "invaluable document," so far as extracts have been given and references made in the history, appears, after all, abundantly to detail the extravagances and disorders of the New Lights, but to have not much

* Dav. Hls., p, 219.

to say about the revival under the Cumberland Presbyterians. Must the latter be held responsible for the errors in doctrine and conduct of the former? It is known to all who interest themselves in the subject, that the Cumberland Presbyterians differ as widely in their doctrines from the New Lights, as Old and New School Presbyterians differ from that heretical sect; and they have opposed their errors with equal zeal and success.

How stands the case of Mr. Lyle's testimony against the revival of 1800? A fair examination leads to the following conclusions. He was a man "of moderate talents," "naturally amiable, though he had his weaknesses, and was occasionally betrayed into too passionate warmth."* He kept a Diary from 1801 to 1803, inclusive, in which he noted incidents that occurred among the New Lights, headed by Stone, Marshall, and others. He also kept a journal of his two months' tour in the Cumberland Presbytery, in 1805. His Diaries divulge the very many extravagances and disorders of the excitement under Stone, Marshall, and the New Lights, but comparatively little to the discredit of the revival in which McGready, Ewing, and the Cumberland Presbyterians were the instruments. He forbade the use of more than an extract of a few particulars, for a specified purpose. The historian has used his sketches profusely; but whether alone for the purpose specified is indeed questionable. And by failing to distinguish justly and accurately between the revival in which the Cumberland Presbyterians originated, and that from

* *Dev. His.*, p. 118

which the New Lights sprung, his narrative is liable to confuse his readers, and leave them to attribute to the former what is only applicable to the latter. Surely the disorders of the revival under Stone, Marshall, and the New Lights, which appeared in upper Kentucky, in 1801, do not belong to the revival in the lower part of that State and Tennessee, which commenced about four years before, under the preaching of Rev. James McGready: the two parties were as distinct in their operations as in their doctrines.

There are very strong marks of resemblance between the revival of 1800 and the great awakening of 1740. The awakening commenced in 1734, at Northampton, under the ministry of the elder Edwards; the revival began in 1797, under the preaching of Mr. McGready. The doctrine of justification by faith was the immediate occasion of the former; * the doctrines of regeneration, faith, and repentance first aroused the people to serious inquiry in the latter. Previous to the former, vital piety had greatly declined, and nobody doubted that there were many unconverted ministers; † previous to the latter the Presbyterian church in the west is universally acknowledged to have been in a cold and lifeless state, many of her ministers appearing not to possess much of the spirit of the gospel. In the former, those whom Tennent, in his famous Nottingham sermon, called "Pharisee ministers" bitterly opposed the revival of religion, ridiculed the doctrines, and defamed the men by whom it was carried on; ‡ in the latter, Balch

* Tracy's History, p. 1

† Ib. p. 7

‡ Ib. p. 69

ridiculed the doctrines preached ; Craighead and others opposed and misrepresented the ministers engaged in promoting the work. In the former, many of the ministers and people ascribed the work to other causes than the Spirit's agency, and slandered Whitefield, the Tennents, Blair and others ; in the latter, carnal professors and worldly formalists united with infidels in decrying the work as spurious, and slandering its promoters as fanatics. In the former, opposition to the revival led to Synodical tyranny, which caused a separation ; in the latter, the same thing occurred : like causes producing like effects. In both there were outcries, faintings, bodily agitations, and, it must be added, some disorders.* In both there were to be found a few enthusiasts, like Davenport in the one, and Rankin in the other, who embraced odious errors in doctrine, occasioned much scandal, and grieved the people of God. In both the Lord had many faithful servants who, in the midst of

* Dr. Davidson, after giving the most revolting accounts of the bodily agitations, remarks : " The revivals which took place in 1735 and 1742, of which the elder Edwards has given so full and luminous an account, were accompanied with similar bodily agitations to those witnessed in Kentucky. There were repeated instances of fainting, falling, trances, numbness, convulsions, and outcries."—p. 183.

He then proceeds to mention many other extravagances and disorders, some of which—if they were witnessed in the revival of 1800 at all—could have existed only among the New Lights. It is denied that the friends of the true revival ever relied on dreams, visions, and voices. And as to "apostacies by thousands," the testimony of friends and foes stands in direct contradiction. On the contrary, it has been a matter of general surprise that those who professed conversion, so uniformly honored their profession.

their trials and persecutions, could say with Paul: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." From both the Lord raised up a great multitude of witnesses, strong in faith, valiant for the truth, and made them powerful in accomplishment. The time for the right appreciation of the former has already come. The time for awarding justice to the latter cannot be long delayed.

In 1740, the Old Side condemned the revival as spurious, the New Side strenuously maintaining that it was genuine. The same parties existed in 1800. In the former revival the Old Side contended that a change of heart and life could not be the work of the Spirit of God, when attended by bodily commotions, while the New Side maintained the contrary. In the latter revival, the parties were divided on the same point. In 1740, the Old Side wrongfully accused the New Side of admitting visions, trances, and faintings, to be evidences of a saving change; this, of course, was indignantly denied. In 1800, the same unjust accusations were made, and are to this day repeated; but from first to last they have been denied as false and slanderous. In healing the schism, in 1758, the parties made mutual concessions, among which the following are found: "The Synod of New York declared its belief unaltered concerning the revival; and the united Synod declared, that a change to penitence, faith, and a holy life, is to be ascribed to the Spirit of God, even

though attended with ‘bodily commotions’ and other irregularities; and that persons who, without such a change, fancy themselves converted because they have had visions, or trances, or faintings, or the like, are ‘under a dangerous delusion.’”*

The revival of 1740 continued in different places for many years. The New Side, in the meantime, ever zealous, energetic, and successful, increased wonderfully; while the Old Side either dwindled or remained stationary: the natural consequences of favoring and of opposing this gracious revival. The number of ministers in the Synod of New York † was more than tripled in seventeen years, ‡ while the Synod of Philadelphia had only about the same number of members which the division had left, about twenty. § Tracy also says, “The Synod of Philadelphia, || too, must have perceived that they were steadily losing their importance, and could escape becoming an insignificant sect only by uniting with that body which would certainly become *the Presbyterian church of America.*”

Similar results followed the revival of 1800 and the separation of the Cumberland from the Presbyterian branch. Notwithstanding the continual replenishing of the latter by immigration, her increase of strength and numbers was not to compare with the rapid growth of the former. In the Presbyterian church revivals, if any occurred, were certainly too few and inconsiderable, to attract notice; while the entire bounds of Cumberland Presbyterian operations were one continued scene of

* Tracy's His., p. 337. † New Side. ‡ Tracy's His., p. 336. § 1b. || Old Side.

revival influences. While the Presbyterian ministers preached regularly to their thin and scattered congregations, or directed their attention to cities and large towns; the Cumberlands, that they might preach the gospel to the poor, mounted their horses, explored every nook and corner of the land, scaled mountains, swam rivers, penetrated forests, regardless of burning suns or raging storms, often sleeping on cabin floors with their saddle-bags for their pillows, and sharing the homely fare of their poor but warm-hearted entertainers. While some pious hearts among the former mourned over the dearth and deadness which prevailed for so long a season, lamenting "the low state of religion, the paucity of conversions and backwardness in supporting the ministry, &c.;"* the people of the latter could rejoice exceedingly at the success of their missionaries, carrying the torch of divine truth in every direction, as well as the wonderful results of their camp-meetings, amounting to twenty, sixty, hundred, and, in one instance, a few years since, three hundred conversions. The state of religion continued lamentably low in the Presbyterian church at the west, until 1825 or '26, when a change for the better appeared. And it may be well to notice some of the instrumentalities which appear to have been blessed by the Head of the church to this happy result.

1. A very different style and manner of preaching. The preaching which had been too much of a cold and spiritless oratory, calculated only to affect the head, now became in a number of instances warm and animated, as

* Davidson's History, p. 326.

if designed to touch the heart. Most of those who adopted the new style were supposed by their hearers to have modified their doctrines, were understood to preach a universal atonement, and to offer a full, free salvation to all, insomuch that they were frequently mistaken for Cumberlands. These have generally been more popular with the latter, than with many of their own brethren. They have been the instruments of a number of revivals. The most prominent, if not the first, of these is Rev. Nathan H. Hall, D. D., Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Kentucky. With the approbation of his brethren who felt the necessity of strong measures to arrest the existing evils, he held two protracted meetings in a few weeks of each other, which were attended with the divine blessing. The Synod holding their meeting in the interval between the two, its members, before they parted, had received "something of a revival in their own breasts, and entered into an agreement to pray at a concerted time" — whether in imitation of Mr. McGready's covenant with his people of the same tenor, so signally blessed to the ushering in of the great revival of 1800, it is not stated — "for the outpouring of the Spirit on their respective churches. Many of the churches were greatly refreshed." * Rev. Messrs. Gallahar and Ross itinerated through Kentucky and Ohio; and their labors were abundantly blessed. To these succeeded a number of revival preachers, so called, and the church has been refreshed and built up in many places. Some wits have been ungenerous

* Davidson, p. 327.

enough to say of some of these men, that they would out-Cumberland the Cumberlands themselves. True it is, they have been the instruments of changing to some extent the state of things in their own church; they have rendered signal service to our common Christianity; deserve the gratitude of pious hearts; and it is to be wished that their church could send out many more of a like spirit.

2. The adoption of what has been called new measures. Not that these measures were new among Cumberland Presbyterians, for they had been much in use among them, from the time of the revival in 1800; but they now, for the first time, found favor in the mother church. Some of them, however, received new names: what had been known as the mourner's bench, was now called "*the anxious seat*," and meetings for directing seekers of religion were called "*inquiry meetings*." "The introduction of the anxious seat, says Dr. Davidson, is "ascribed to Dr. Anderson of Tennessee,"* that is the eastern section of the State. This is probably correct, since that minister is known to have labored much for the promotion of revivals among the churches of his denomination, and with considerable success. His camp meetings were usually attended with more or less good fruits. He appears to have been a zealous, talented, and successful minister.

3. The introduction of camp-meetings. The historian says they were "revived." It is not known that old Presbyterians ever approved, or more than barely

* DAY. HIS., Note on p 330

tolerated them, as they were held by the revival party; and after the separation, it was understood that their faces were set, like flint, against them. They ridiculed and censured their Cumberland brethren for holding them.* But about this time they were “revived,”

* Some few years after the separation, two young Cumberland ministers — Rev. Samuel M. Aston, now of Ohio, and Rev. George Donnell, late pastor of the church in Lebanon, Tenn., now deceased — were appointed to spend a summer in east Tennessee, to assist their brethren already there in conducting the revival, holding camp meetings, &c. The labors of these missionaries were abundantly blessed, and the work increased and extended in various directions. Dr. Anderson appeared to have been taken by surprise; he had never seen it in this fashion. “Those that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.” It is said, he at length concluded that it was the duty of Presbyterians, if they were not disposed to yield up the whole country to these Cumberlands, to equal them in zeal, in labor, and in faith. “We must,” he is reported to have said, “appoint camp meeting for camp meeting, have sermon for sermon, and mourner’s bench for mourner’s bench.” His people, under his direction, began to hold camp meetings, which were conducted in the Cumberland style, as far as might comport with their views of order. On one occasion Messrs. Aston and Donnell attended for a day. Dr. Anderson and another minister preached, as these brethren thought, the precious doctrines of the gospel, the very doctrines which they loved and preached themselves. Mourners were invited to come before the stand. Many did so. All seemed like one of their own Cumberland meetings, and they looked at each other and inquired, can this be an old Presbyterian meeting? They thought themselves strangers to all present, except the preachers; but not being at all noticed by them, they remained where they had first taken seats. They were mistaken. A gentleman who had attended one of their meetings recognized them, and with tears besought them to instruct and pray for his daughter, who was a little apart from the crowd, under deep convictions. They complied. While they were engaged with the young lady, a large number of persons collected

unnecessarily multiplied, and brought within two or three miles of populous towns; but occasioning great disorder and some crimes, they fell into such disuse as nuisances, that only one is occasionally held in Kentucky, under prudent regulations.* What was the necessity for camp-meetings so near to populous towns? And because they were abused where they were not needed, must they be discontinued where the people could not otherwise be accommodated? Verily they might have taken another lesson from their Cumberland brethren.

It has been said a thousand times, and doubtless will be repeated ten thousand times more — by the friends of the revival, of course — that the Presbyterian church at the west has all along prospered, just in proportion as she has favored revivals and adopted revival measures. For about twenty years after the suspending and prohibitive acts of the Kentucky Synod, she seemed barely to exist; and if all the representations of her own writers on the subject are just, her state must have been

around them, among whom were Dr. Anderson and some of his elders. Mr. Donnell, though at the time very young, was remarkably fluent in exhortation, and gifted in prayer. After learning the state of the young lady's mind, her difficulties, discouragements, &c, he instructed and prayed for her. Mr. Aston says it was a solemn and heavenly time, and all seemed to feel it so. On arising from their knees, Dr. Anderson remarked to one of his members, "it afflicts me to my very heart that I cannot take to my bosom a young man who can pray and talk like that; but were I to do so, what would be the use of denominational distinctions?" Aston and Donnell left without further notice.

* Dav. His., p. 330.

deeply deplored by all her pious people : and at no time has she been destitute of a greater or less number, whose lives and characters would compare favorably with the most pious. Camp and protracted meetings, and revival measures, which were so greatly blessed for a few years, appear never to have been generally approved in that church, and of late years have much declined. Revival preachers, too, appear not to be adequately appreciated and encouraged. Dr. Hall, however, who has been more conversant with revivals than any minister of the Presbyterian church in the west, still lives. For a few years past he has traveled extensively. His aid has been solicited in all parts of the country ; and he has been instrumental in gathering great numbers into the churches. Neither the distrust of some of his brethren can discourage, nor opposition from any quarter overawe him. Though he has already passed his three score years, he seems still to be animated with the fire and fervor of a youthful Stephen, who was full of faith and the Holy Ghost.*

During the twenty-five years' dearth and deadness in the Presbyterian church, and ever since up to the present time, the Cumberland Presbyterians have uniformly and unfalteringly fostered the revival in which they had their birth, and to which, under God, they owe their unexampled growth and prosperity.

*" He is equal to any of you Cumberlands," said one of his admiring brethren (the late Dr. Goodlet,) on inviting the writer to accompany him one evening, to the protracted meeting, held by Dr. Hall in Nashville, a few years since.

The revival of 1800 still continues, after more than half a century, adding thousands to their churches every year—not always in the same places—but in many of the old settlements as well as the new. The results of camp and protracted meetings, as well as of missionary operations, as reported almost every week from various parts of the church, still continue to cheer the hearts of those who love Zion and call for heart-felt gratitude to the God of revivals. And could all branches of the Presbyterian family free themselves from certain unreasonable prejudices, enlist with suitable energy and enlightened zeal, relying alone on truth as the instrument, and the Holy Spirit as the Author of the gracious work; the western wilderness might be expected to blossom as the rose; the thousands who are flocking thereto, might be converted and made heirs of heaven, instead of being blinded by the god of this world and cast down to perdition; and who can estimate the power of that impulse which would be given to the world's evangelization?

II. It is proposed to show that some of the ministers, opposing the revival, were not consistent Presbyterians, notwithstanding their membership in that church, or they were deceived respecting the character of the work. The most prominent of these, was Rev. Thomas B. Craighead, known not only for his learning and eloquence, but also for his fierceness for what he called orthodoxy and order. So great a favorite was he with the anti-revival party, that he was the very man who was called to the pastorate of a society composed of

the most inveterate opposers of the revival. This society was a party which had once belonged to the Shiloh congregation; but having violently closed the doors of the church against their pastor, Mr. Hodge, who was a promoter of the revival; and the Presbytery having decided the case in Mr. Hodge's favor and adversely to these malcontents, they seceded and formed a separate church under Craighead. The Presbytery still refusing to sanction this division, the Commission, being assembled to investigate the affairs of the Cumberland Presbytery, in the year 1805, reversed the judgment of that Presbytery, thus sanctioning the opposition and sustaining the man who was believed to have been the chief instrument in fomenting it. Is it possible to conceive that the Commission would have done this, if they had supposed Craighead guilty of any dissent from their Confession?

Since Dr. Craighead's heresies have become clearly developed and he has fallen under the censures of the church, some have manifested a disposition to antedate his errors. If this could be done, it might afford a degree of plausibility to the idea that neither he nor his "*fama clamosa* letter" had any undue influence on the Commission of Synod. Even this candid historian — misled doubtless by his party predilection — speaks thus of what was known of his sentiments in April, 1803: "On the other hand, Craighead, though a man of brilliant talents, and a staunch champion for discipline and order, made no pretensions to rigid orthodoxy,* and

* Dav. His., p. 223.

his Pelagian sentiments were no secret." This statement will very much surprise all the cotemporaries and hearers of Mr. Craighead who are now alive, and who unite in declaring that he was as much the champion of Presbyterian orthodoxy as of order, until about the year 1805. If the statement quoted be strictly true, why did the Presbytery or the Kentucky Synod hold in fellowship, for a term of years, a man whose Pelagian sentiments were no secret? Why was he selected to head the anti-revival party of the Shiloh congregation? And why were the schismatical and violent acts of that party sustained by the Commission of Kentucky Synod, who reversed the judgment of Presbytery in the premises? Lastly, why did that Commission illegally act upon a mere *fama clamosa* letter — and that too, of a man "whose Pelagian sentiments were no secret?" Verily the statement which afterwards became true, is here antedated by some years. It is true that some members of Mr. Craighead's congregation at Spring Hill, and among others Mr. Ewing, had suspected him of making too little distinction between historical and saving faith, and of rejecting the doctrine of regeneration; but even with these he was understood to clamor for predestination as taught in the Confession. As evidence respecting the date of Mr. Craighead's errors, the act of the Commission in 1805 may be appealed to. The historian, after giving his account of all the proceedings of the Commission, till he comes to the last, says: "The Commission then took up the case of Mr. Craighead, charged by common fame as denying the

doctrines of election and the special operations of the Spirit of God in conversion. He was examined on these points, the questions and answers being in writing, and his answers pronounced agreeable to the Confession, a few ambiguous and unsatisfactory expressions excepted."* This verdict at the time was doubtless just; and the subsequent heresies of the man do not prove it to have been unjust when it was rendered. To suppose otherwise would involve this alternative: either Craighead's Pelagian sentiments had been and still were a secret; or his opposition and *fama clamosa* letter were thus rewarded. The latter is disproved by the high character of the judges. The former therefore must be true; and Dr. Craighead, until after 1805, was regarded, with few exceptions and on the whole, as orthodox in his sentiments by the Presbyterian church. But the violence of his opposition to the revival proves him to have been, as a Presbyterian, inconsistent in practice. And notwithstanding his peculiar views on faith, regeneration, and the germs of other errors which he may have secretly entertained, his opposition was avowedly prompted by his zeal for Presbyterian orthodoxy and order.

It is remarkable that Dr. Craighead, so strenuous for Calvinistic orthodoxy, should have been indifferent to the great doctrines of saving faith and regeneration, which are, according to this system, essential to salvation. With all his reputed talents, his theological system must have been an anomaly; and it is not wonderful that, in 1811, he should be deposed by his Presbytery for reject-

* Dav. His., p. 242.

ing those very doctrines, for the denial of which he had been tried and acquitted by the Commission of Synod, in 1805, viz: "the denial of election and the special operation of the Spirit of God in conversion," &c. It would seem that, climbing to the highest point of Calvinism, he became dizzy and alarmed, and fell to the very depths of Pelagianism. And the five Presbyterian ministers who seceded from that church, formed the Springfield Presbytery, and afterwards constituted the New Light party, though most of them had once been Calvinists of the strictest sect, were not withheld from great extravagances and fatal errors: some of them even joined the Shakers. Dr. Davidson truly says: "that it was from the New Light party almost exclusively that the Shakers drew their proselytes." * So true it is that rigid Calvinism, when carried to the extreme limits to which some of its tenets inevitably tend, involves its votaries in a dilemma whose horns are equally absurd, and equally remote from revealed truth. Probably these men, being led by their philosophy of Calvinism to the extreme point of fatality, and alarmed at their position—instead of settling themselves on "the sure word of prophecy"—seized the other horn of the dilemma, and bolted off into Pelagianism, Unitarianism, or Shakerism. This was acting like men on a burning vessel, who, regardless of the life-boat which comes to their rescue, and intent only on escaping the fire, rush headlong into the water, and are drowned.

That "extremes meet" may be one maxim which

* Dav. His., p. 271.

will not strictly apply to them; but their course would seem to verify another which says, "there is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous." They saw no medium between the two extremes. Terrified alike, by the rocks of Calvinism on the one hand and the whirlpool of Arminianism on the other, they were wrecked on the shoals of Pelagianism or engulfed in the mire of Shakerism. They knew not that divine truth secures a safe passage between the Scylla and Charybdis. This discovery was left to those consistent promoters of the great revival, who, being tried in the iron furnace of affliction, God brought them out, "to be unto him a people of inheritance, as they are to this day." * He it was who conducted them through the Red Sea of opposition; who stood their sheltering cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, while passing from the yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny; who established them in the promised land, their rightful inheritance. Their Moses and Aaron were Ewing, McGee, Anderson, King, McAdow, and others, whose names will ever be held in grateful remembrance.

The reader must now be convinced that Dr. Craighead, the Ajax Telemon of the party opposing the revival, was not a consistent Presbyterian; also that Messrs. Balch and Bowman, though less talented and less influential, are to be classed with him. And if the statements of the historian are to be relied on, the other "Presbyterian clergy of the lower settlement," with the exception of Messrs. McGready, Hodge, McGee,

* Deuteronomy iv, 20.

McAdow and Rankin, must be assigned to the same class. For Dr. Davidson himself unequivocally testifies, that "all the rest of their brethren disapproved and discountenanced the work from its commencement, as spurious." *

Into how lamentable a state had the Presbyterian Church fallen at the time and in the region referred to! Besides Dr. Craighead, there was a Rev. James Balch who could publicly oppose the doctrines of faith, repentance and regeneration, † a Rev. John Bowman, who favored the views of Stone, ‡ a Rev. Terah Templin, and a Rev. Samuel Donnell; § the two last acknowledged by the historian to have been neither qualified by nature or education to be conspicuous or influential. But it requires no great depth or cultivation of intellect to do evil, inflict wounds or oppose a revival, especially when

* Davidson's History, page 135. † Smith, page 568. ‡ Davidson's History, p. 229.

§ An aged and highly respected minister, now of the Protestant Methodist Church, has related an incident which occurred at the congregation of Sugg's Creek, and was witnessed by himself when a young man, before he had professed religion. As it may illustrate the spirit of the times, as well as of the men, it is given as follows:

It so happened that the appointments of this Rev. Samuel Donnell and James B. Porter conflicted. From the state of feeling between the parties, it is presumable that this was neither expected nor desired by either. Donnell had long been known as the teacher of a classical school, and an inveterate opposer of the revival. Porter was one of those young men whom Dr. Davidson has denominated "illiterate exhorters"—notwithstanding Smith, quoting from the minutes of Presbytery, shows that his examination on the languages had been sustained, on his reception as a candidate for the ministry*—and a zealous promoter of the work of God. The young man of course yielded the popular hour to the venerable father, who gave one of his

* Page 594.

led on by such men as Craighead, Balch and Bowman. It seems truly surprising that any of these men, or any others who opposed the revival from its commencement, as spurious, should have ever been regarded as consistent Calvinists and orthodox Presbyterians; but some of them continued to be so regarded by their party until death. These men occupying a high standing in the church, and being situated where they might be supposed to know all about the revival, its supporters and the manner in which it was conducted, were able to forestall the judgment of ministers and people at a distance, and prejudice their minds against the work, "as spurious."

Here it may be proper to pause and inquire, whether there ever was a revival which could be regarded otherwise than spurious, by men of the character of those above described? Whether, if a second Pentecost,

spiritless and uninteresting discourses — doubtless intended to be very orthodox — occupying a considerable portion of the time in denouncing and warning against the abominable heresies which this people were now about to hear from the young man who would follow him. The people who had principally assembled to hear Porter, waited with commendable patience, until their desire could be gratified. Mr. Porter made no allusion to the abuse, in advance, of himself and his doctrine by Donnell, except by quoting from Paul: "I confess, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets." * His discourse was on the necessity of faith, repentance, and regeneration. He was very careful to sustain his positions by the scriptures. His speech was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The people who, under the former sermon, seemed so little interested, now became excited and inquiring. The good work revived, mourners were invited; and numbers professed joy and peace in believing.

* Acts xxiv, 14.

with all the power and purity of the first should come, it would be regarded otherwise than spurious, by a man whose theology excluded saving faith, or a man who opposed and ridiculed faith, repentance, and regeneration? Also whether men destitute of grace and piety, however orthodox in their sentiments, would not be likely to oppose the pentecostal shower, hearing it ridiculed, censured, and denounced as spurious, by some ministers revered for their age, experience, and long services, and by others celebrated for their talents, learning, and eloquence? And it may again be inquired, whether the mere formalist, in his false and fancied security, as well as the unconverted sinner, in his stiff-necked and hard-hearted rebellion, might not be expected, all things considered, to join the hue and cry raised by such men, and denounce the revival as spurious? These things should be taken into consideration, by way of apology for, and in justice to, that portion of the ministers and people of the Presbyterian church, who arrayed themselves in opposition to the revival of 1800. Some were not consistent Presbyterians; others were deceived respecting the character of the work.

III. The revival of 1800, which gave birth to the Cumberland Presbyterian church, is to be distinguished from the work which resulted in "the New Light schism," so called. The two have been, by a certain class of writers and talkers, too often confounded. At this late day all ought to know, and all might know by a little honest inquiry, that they were entirely and essentially different. These two religious movements

differed in the time and place of their commencement as well as in their progress; the adherents of the one being scattered and lost among other sects; while the promoters of the other, having been born in the revival, continue to live in the revival, as it progresses through their instrumentality, united and prosperous to the present day. The two were conducted by men, differing as widely in their doctrinal views as in the tests of genuine conviction and conversion, which were recognized by the parties respectively; the one relying too much on dreams, visions and voices; while the other admit nothing unwarranted by the word of God. The two works agreed in nothing, except in certain external developments, such as excited feelings, outcries, and bodily agitations. In all revivals, the genuineness of the doctrines preached as well as of the conversions experienced are the grand essentials; while outcries and bodily affections are merely accidentals.

How ministers of the gospel, accustomed to discriminate between the true and the false, and desiring to distinguish what is genuine from what is spurious, ever could, or now can confound the revival conducted by McGready, Hodge, McGee, Ewing, and others, with the excitement under Stone, Marshal, and the New Lights, is altogether unaccountable. It is an error, injurious as it is unjust. It may have originated with some from a want of due information. It may have been perpetuated among others by the violence of party spirit. And it may have had countenance and encouragement from those who saw the difficulties in which the

Commission of Kentucky Synod had involved themselves, and perhaps thought the necessities of their case required some color of justification, for so egregious blunders and unconstitutional acts.

But a Presbyterian divine of the Old School, the learned Dr. Davidson, has written and published, as late as the year 1847, "a history of the Presbyterian church in the State of Kentucky;" and his work bears many marks of candor and impartiality. Surely it might have been expected that such a man would speak the truth in love, on so important a subject, alike regardless of any lingering party reluctance and of the apprehension of consequences to his own sect. He was in no way connected with the revival of 1800, nor enlisted in the ranks of its opposers; and consequently his character was not staked on the success of that opposition. Had his spiritual pride been wounded and his ecclesiastical ambition counteracted by the current of events, the prospect of justice at his hands had been less. Had he seen those whom he would have rejected and prohibited, rising to an eminence and usefulness which commanded the attention and admiration of thousands, while he could gain the hearing of only as many tens or hundreds, an occasional burst of bitterness would have been neither unnatural nor unpardonable. Or had he seen those whom he had stigmatized, as a disorderly sect, endeavored to suppress and blot out of ecclesiastical existence, advancing in a career of usefulness which his own sect has never equaled, and growing in numbers which his own cannot long surpass, he might

have found an apology for writing as a partizan. But free from party bias of these kinds, it was not to be expected that he would, in a history of the revival of 1800, confound the Cumberland Presbyterians with the New Lights, or charge upon the former, delusions similar to those which misled and disgraced the latter. And that a writer of his general candor has done so, can only be accounted for on the supposition that he has derived his information from prejudiced sources, or from those who had an interest in affording some show of justification for the Commission of Kentucky Synod : and therefore the historian has been egregiously imposed upon.

But the reader may inquire with astonishment, has the good Dr. Davidson indeed assimilated or associated the Cumberland Presbyterians with the New Lights and their odious errors? Truth compels the answer, that he has certainly done so. Several passages, bearing more or less on this point, might be referred to; but an extract from his ninth chapter, on what he styles "the Cumberland Presbyterian Schism" must suffice. After having given in previous chapters a most disgusting account of the extravagances and disorders of the New Lights,* their doctrinal errors, ridiculous tergiversations,

* Chapter sixth of the History is devoted "to the Extravagances and Disorders of the Revival," as though *the revival itself* were chargeable with them. But when examination is made with a view to ascertain, who were really guilty; it becomes evident from the actors in those scenes, from the places where they occurred and from the persons who witnessed and reported them, that they are chargeable, with scarcely an exception, upon the New Light sect. Who were the actors? Persons figuring among the New Lights, who

and foul apostasies to Shakerism, he begins the chapter as follows :

“ Unlike the still small voice, or the softly flowing waters of Siloa, the great revival of 1800 rather resembled the whirlwind, the earthquake, the impetuous torrent, whose track was marked by violence and desolation. While numbers in the northern and central portions of Kentucky were running into the vagaries of the New Lights, or rushing from one extreme of wild extravagance to the other of Shaker mysticism, the south-western portion witnessed the gradual maturing of preparations for similar delusions, and a more permanent schism.”

were unknown, except by report, to the ministers and people in the Green River and Cumberland settlements. Where did they occur? In central and upper Kentucky, where the New Lights bore sway. Who has reported, and from whom did the historian derive his facts? From the book of McNemar, the Shaker, and the Diary of Mr. Lyle. All this is according to the historian's own showing. McNemar could have known nothing personally, nor has he reported any thing, of what occurred in the Green River and Cumberland settlements, for it does not appear that he was there during the time. And Lyle could have known as little, while keeping his Diary during the years 1801, 1802 and 1803; for it appears from the Diary itself, that it records only what he witnessed among those who afterwards were called New Lights. And the historian shows that Lyle's tour of two months in the Green River country, was not until 1805; and his Journal refers to what he witnessed during that time. With what right or reason then are these “ Extravagances and Disorders ” charged upon *the revival*, in the Green River and Cumberland settlements, which gave birth to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church? The Christian world has a right to know. Posterity will demand an answer. But to explain this, on any just principles, will puzzle even the sagacity of a Jesuit.

In the above extract, the Cumberland Presbyterians are charged with delusions, similar to those of the New Lights and the Shakers. This charge, published to the world by a Presbyterian divine, a man of piety and learning, is either true or false. If it is true, they who have rendered themselves obnoxious to the charge deserve discountenance and censure from the Christian world; but if false, those who imposed upon the historian's credulity, tempting him to vend so vile a slander, ought to hide their heads in shame and confusion. What though the candid historian *does* evince occasional fondness for splendid passages and sonorous periods? This is allowable in so great a scholar and so fine a writer. What though he *has* exercised his taste in the above extract? It contains matter for the investigation of the whole Christian world? and an impartial verdict will be awarded, either for or against the accused as well as the accuser. What though his *debut* in this chapter *was* intended to be as brilliant, as it is elaborate. The charge is obvious, the slander palpable.

It is fortunate that this charge, so ungenerous and unjust, can be so easily refuted. More than a hundred thousand Cumberland Presbyterians will, all and each, repudiate it. All other denominations will deny it. Presbyterians themselves, whether Old or New School, who have had any intercourse with the accused, will do justice to truth, and contradict it. Thousands of respectable witnesses, belonging to no church, can testify with what zeal, ability, and success the Cumberland Presbyterians have, in times past, contended

against the New Light errorists, insomuch that this heresy seldom dares, in these days, to raise its deformed head within the bounds of their operations. In truth, New Lightism is dead and buried: no thanks to the historian and his informants. And in addition to all this testimony, Dr. Davidson himself shall refute his own charge. He shall, indeed, bear testimony disproving his own accusation. This he shall do fully and unequivocally, in the following extract from his history. Speaking of the Cumberland Presbyterians, he says:

“They endeavored, in the altered edition of the Confession and Catechisms, to steer a middle course between Calvinism and Arminianism, (if a middle course there can be,) rejecting the doctrines of eternal reprobation, limited atonement, and special grace, and maintaining that the Spirit of God operates on the world, or co-extensively with the atonement, so as to leave all men inexcusable.”*

Here is the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, with the alterations above specified. Are there any delusions here, similar to those of the New Lights or the Shakers? Dr. Davidson and his informants, with down-cast eyes

* Dav. His, p. 256. No historian has any right to give his own inference for fact: some men's inferences are not just. He represents the Cumberland Presbyterians as rejecting “the doctrine of special grace.” He may have inferred or thought so, but had no right to say so. Where does he derive authority for this? He refers in a note to “Religious Encycl. Buck, art. Cumb. Presb.,” for the truth of his whole statement. But neither of these works sustain him. Neither of them speak of the rejection of “special grace.”

and blushing cheeks, are compelled to answer NO. Truth is omnipotent.

IV. This confounding of the two different works probably had much influence on the proceedings of Kentucky Synod and the sanction of the General Assembly: other causes doubtless contributed to the same results. This will appear abundantly evident, by fair deductions from well authenticated facts, compared with the statements of the historian, on the subjects following.

1. *Opposition to the revival.* The historian admits that the forty-five persons, hopefully converted, at the first regular camp-meeting, held by Mr. McGready and others at Gasper river church, in 1800, "at a subsequent period, afforded every evidence, by their conduct, of genuine conversions." This goes far to confirm a similar statement of Mr. McGready, respecting the numerous conversions of the three preceding years. On the same page, Dr. Davidson, speaking of the clergy of the Green river and Cumberland countries, where, it will be recollected, the revival commenced and progressed nearly four years before the New Light excitement commenced in central and upper Kentucky, says that Messrs. McGready, Hodge, McGee, McAdow, and Rankin, were the only supporters of that revival. He then adds, that "all the rest of their brethren disapproved and discountenanced the work from its commencement, as spurious."* It may be fairly inferred, therefore, that all the clergy of that region, except the five above named, were not consistent Presbyterians: for oppo-

* Page 185.

sition to a genuine revival of religion is not consistent with Presbyterianism. And this inference receives the strength of the fullest assurance, when it is remembered that the most prejudiced party writers agree, that the work in its earlier stages was genuine.

2. *Party spirit.* The historian testifies that, in 1803, the ten ministers, composing the new Cumberland Presbytery, were divided into the revival and anti-revival parties, equally balanced; that these parties were distinctly marked, and held no intercourse with each other, except when thrown together at the ecclesiastical meetings.* This was, indeed, a lamentable state of things: "Every city or house divided against itself, shall not stand."† Craighead, that "man of brilliant talents, that staunch champion for discipline and order,"‡ ceased not to decry the revival, and clamor against its promoters. Balch, less skillful in argument, could ridicule the doctrines of faith, repentance, and regeneration. Their associates, with feebler powers and less influence, nevertheless acted in concert. There is no evidence that the ministers of the evangelical or revival party ever undertook to repel these attacks. Neither Smith nor Davidson make mention of any thing of the kind. And from the recollection of several surviving witnesses, it would appear, that, grieved and afflicted as they must have been, they labored incessantly, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." They probably felt that they were doing a great work, so that they could not come down §

* Page 228.

† Matthew xii, 25.

‡ Dav. His., p. 228.

§ Neh. vi, 8.

to strive with their brethren about words to no profit.* The conduct of the anti-revival party was not long in producing its mischievous fruits ; and a violent, grievous, and wide spread party spirit was engendered.

* Wranglers for orthodoxy and order, like those, are apt to wax warmer and grow fiercer, the more they are noticed. As a general rule, men of a meek and quiet spirit would do well to let them alone, especially in a season of revival. God will take care of his own cause. He needs no carnal weapons to defend it. However much the friends of the revival and the good cause itself may have suffered by the unreasonable conduct of the opposition, it is probable that they suffered far less than they would have done, if they had returned railing for railing. In revivals of religion, party spirit and bitter controversy are generally attended with evil, and only evil. Who can tell but the continuance of the great revival of 1800, for so great a number of years, is owing to the wise and amiable forbearance of its friends and promoters ? Very different is the history of the New Light excitement which arose, like a brilliant meteor, and having spent its force, sunk into the slough of loathsome errors. Who and how many were censurable, it is not easy to determine. It is to be feared that some did not "walk in all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love."

Among a number of significant examples, the historian gives the following :

"The sacraments no longer presented the pleasing spectacle of brethren in unity. The stand was converted into an arena for controversy. If Stone promulgated his errors, Lyle and Cameron felt it to be their duty to counteract the subtle poison by broader exhibitions of the opposite truth. If Blythe preached according to the Westminster Confession, Marshall took offense, supposing it to have been done out of contradiction to him. In private he ridiculed Blythe for adhering so closely to the track of the Confession ; and when taken aside for a conference by Lyle, Blythe and McPheeters, he flew into a rage and accused them of misrepresenting him ; though he afterwards professed to be reconciled ;" page 168.

It may be questioned, whether it would not have been better for

3. *Loss of influence.* — The historian, anxious to acquit the Presbyterian clergy of any extravagant irregularities in the revival, says, “as a body, they neither originated nor countenanced them; and their influence and popularity were in some instances prostrated in consequence.”* This may have been the case in more instances than in those of the anti-revival party in the Cumberland Presbytery; with respect to them, doubtless, the statement is literally true. For however successful for a time in stirring up strife in several places, more especially in the Shiloh congregation, as the revival continued to increase in power and extent, they at length found themselves in a considerable degree deserted by the pious and intelligent of their own, as well as other churches. But comparatively few cared to attend on their ministry or to hear them preach, when they could hear any others; while the people flocked in crowds to the appointments of the men whom they were so bitterly opposing. Their mortification, which must have been extreme, so far from humbling them, seems to have stimulated them to renewed and more vigorous efforts. Hence they uniformly and perseveringly opposed the exhorters, their licensure and ordination: not so much out of unfriendliness to these

the parties to have “held no intercourse with each other, except when thrown together at the ecclesiastical meetings,” rather than to have made the sacraments a scene of contention, and the stand an arena of controversy. Both of these parties would seem to bear very little resemblance to the revival party in the Green river and Cumberland settlements.

* *DAV. HIS.*, p, 140.

young men, as to those who were anxious to employ them as assistants in promoting the revival. Hence but little could be done in the Presbytery, without "warm opposition and protracted discussion." Hence they objected to, and dissented from, certain acts of Presbytery, and finally sent to the Synod of Kentucky their *fama clamosa* letter, already noticed. But when, after a term of years, they saw these same young men whom they had now learned to dislike — some men soon learn to dislike those whom they have unsuccessfully opposed — acquiring an influence and popularity even superior to what they felt conscious of having once enjoyed but now lost, by opposing them; and rising to an eminence and usefulness which they despaired of ever equaling; their ecclesiastical ambition must have experienced a check as mortifying as severe. They had exhausted their entire strength, in their own Presbytery and section of country, but without avail. They must now look to the Synod and other sections, for sympathy and assistance. Disappointed and defeated at home, they hoped for better success abroad. It is probable, however, that they never would have met with sympathy nor success, by means of that *fama clamosa* letter, but for the occurrence of the New Light excitement and the skillful use they were enabled to make of circumstances and events, growing out of the same.

4. *Character and sentiments of ministers.* Among those of central and upper Kentucky, there were many pious men. They were no enemies to revivals. They relied upon the truth, and not impulses, dreams, and

inward impressions. They tried the spirits, whether they were of God. They were filled with astonishment on witnessing the bodily agitations, but ascribed them neither to the agency of the devil, nor to the Spirit of God; nor did they regard them as any evidence, either for or against sound conversion. At first they appear to have viewed and treated them, as did the revival party in the Cumberland settlement; they simply let them alone, neither encouraging nor discouraging them. It was not until after the New Light party had so egregiously abused them, encouraging each other to "*praise God in the dance*," * that Mr. Lyle and others could preach two or three hours against bodily exercise. Had these men fairly understood the character of the revival and its promoters, in the Green River and Cumberland countries, before they had seen and deplored the doctrinal errors and absurd practices of the New Lights in their midst, they doubtless would have approved and co-operated with the former. Or had they investigated without prejudice, they would have discovered that the two works bore no resemblance, except in certain external developments, more or less incident to all great religious excitements; and then they might have been precious brethren and co-laborers with McGready, Hodge, McGee, Ewing, King, and others. Even in 1801, after the great Cane Ridge camp meeting among the New Lights, where there were bodily agitations in abundance, and three thousand are said to have fallen, old Father Rice, Blythe, Stuart, Lyle, and Cameron,

* Dav. Hls., p. 151

though not the advocates of disorder, were filled with surprise and wonder.* “They might be compared,” says the historian, ‘to the pious Jews who saw the paralytic healed with a word, and were amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘we never saw it on this fashion.’ Far from caviling, they hoped that this sudden and extensive religious movement would prove of a solid and salutary character. Even the spasmodic convulsions, the falling down, and sudden convictions, they regarded with interest. These good men had long mourned the deep declension of the church, and had trembled at the triumphant ascendancy of deism, rabid and intolerant, and they almost hoped that, inasmuch as the days of miracles were past, yet nothing short of a miracle could save religion, Providence was pleased to permit these strange spectacles in lieu of miracles, to arrest attention, and thus gain access for the power of truth. *In the truth alone*” — doubtless applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit is to be understood — “they placed their final dependence, as the means of conversion. Nothing in their view could supersede evangelical truth, though other things might prepare the way for its reception.”†

Here are sound views and consistent conduct, in harmony with the sentiments and practice of the promoters of the awakening of 1740 as well as of the instruments of the revival of 1800. And scarcely the shadow of doubt remains, if the leaders of the New

* To these might be added Dr. Cleland and others, who afterwards fell into the New School ranks.

† Dav. His., p. 139.

Light movement had acted according to these views, that the anti-revival party would have stood alone and unaided in their opposition. But when the New Lights began to develop their erroneous doctrines and absurd practices, the pious ministers of upper Kentucky became justly alarmed. They began to think about stemming this torrent of mischief. But unfortunately considering the revival in the Green river and Cumberland countries as the true parent, and erroneously regarding the New Light excitement as the legitimate offspring, they were in the precise position to be misled into the error and injustice of confounding the former with the latter. Their danger of this mistake was the greater, because the New Lights were all around them, where they must be continually afflicted by witnessing their aberrations; while the revival party of the Cumberland Presbytery and the scene of their operations were at a distance; and their opinions of the latter must be formed from such reports as might be made to them. Reports soon came from the contentious and disappointed anti-revival party, unfavorable as might be expected from such men; and the *fama clamosa* letter of Craighead and others seems to have wrought in the minds of these good men, the unjust and ungenerous result: that of wrongfully confounding the Cumberland revival with the New Light excitement.

5. *The Commission and Kentucky Synod.** The

* The attentive reader of Dr. Davidson's history cannot help being a little amused at the author's various attempts to justify the Synod of Kentucky in their proceedings against the Cumberland Presbytery.

distinguished ministers of central and upper Kentucky, already referred to, constituted the source and centre of influence and of ecclesiastical power, in the Synod

Sometimes he almost manifests a disposition, even by bad logic, to forestall the judgment of his readers in favor of those proceedings. This, were it not for his known candor, would seem to betray a consciousness of the great necessities of the Synod's case. An instance of this occurs on page 79, where he speaks of a Commission constituted by order of Hanover Presbytery to examine and ordain Messrs. Crawford and Templin. In this occurrence, he says, the following circumstance is worthy of notice: "The appointment of a *Commission*, invested with full *Presbyterial* powers and functions for a specific purpose, a precedent that may be borne in mind when we come to speak of the Commission in 1805, against whose jurisdiction exceptions were taken on account of their investment with *Synodical* powers for a specific purpose."

It is very remarkable indeed that the following points of difference in the two cases could by any possibility escape the penetration of the learned and logical historian: 1. The exceptions taken against the jurisdiction of the Synod's Commission were not so much, because they were invested with *Synodical* powers, as because they arrogated to themselves powers which no Synod ever did or ever can *possess* by the constitution of the church. 2. The Presbytery's Commission were to perform a clearly defined act, the usual and ordinary ceremonies of ordination; while the Synod's Commission were to perform acts — either not defined, or, if defined, they were exceeded and overreached — which were to be graduated according to circumstances, by the submission or refusal of the Presbytery to surrender the rights of conscience and betray the rights of Presbytery to their unusual and before unheard of demands. 3. The appointment and the power to do a thing *just and lawful* never can authorize an appointment and a power to do things *unjust and unlawful*. And the unlawfulness of those things is settled by the Assembly's action in 1816, in the case of Geneva Presbytery.

Surely the historian and his readers must see that, in finding "a precedent," the good man did not, in this instance, exercise his usual penetration. His logic is lame, and his failure is palpable.

of Kentucky, especially when acting in unison with so "great a luminary" as Dr. Craighead, backed by the anti-revival party. All know how difficult it is to remove prejudices and prepossessions, when they have obtained a lodgment in conscientious hearts. And the minds of these good men once biased by the misrepresentations of the *fama clamosa* letter,* and other

* That this *common fame* letter was an iniquitous affair, gotten up by men who were not too scrupulous to slander their brethren, but quite too tender of their own characters to allow themselves to be made responsible for the truth of what it contained, is clearly evident from the Council's letter of remonstrance to the General Assembly, in 1807. A few extracts are here given, the truth of which is incontrovertible.

"Thus, while the glorious work prevailed, love and harmony abounded among ministers, exhorters, and people. A few of our opposing brethren in the Presbytery carried up to the Synod of Kentucky a common fame letter, formed by themselves. In this letter they grossly misrepresented our characters, conduct, and the doctrines we taught. Although they were eye and ear witnesses of all we did, in a Presbyterian capacity, yet they stated them as circulating reports, and declared, at the same time, that they did not offer them as complaints, nor feel themselves bound to support those charges."

Probably, at the present time, there could not be collected from any or all the branches of the great Presbyterian family, eleven ministers and two elders so little skilled in the government and discipline of their own church, that they could regard a document like this *fama clamosa* letter, otherwise than as slanderous and unworthy of notice, and its authors as deserving severe reprehension. But who can set bounds to party spirit, or restrain its venom, under peculiar circumstances, from infecting honest but ill-informed minds? The authors of this *common fame* letter doubtless expected some advantage to their waning influence, but scarcely dreamed of the adoption of their entire cause by any judicature.

The Council's letter of remonstrance, speaking of the Commission,

calumnious reports from a kindred source, were fully prepared for taking strong measures. Having so long

invested with full Synodical power, before whom the revival ministers of the Cumberland Presbytery, and all the young men, had been cited to appear, also states the following: "We appeared accordingly, and produced the minutes of our Presbytery, and expected them to serve as written testimony of facts. But the Commission paid very little regard to them. They took the common fame letter, formed their docket from it, and arranged their charges against us in the same order they stood in the letter. We plead to be taken on our minutes, which were written testimony of all we had done. And, if they took us upon that letter, that they would call forward the authors thereof, who had subscribed their names to it, and agreeably to discipline, on charges exhibited against a gospel minister, require them to support those charges, or stand liable to censure for slanderous reports. But the Commission, regardless of all our entreaties, commanded us to order." * * * "At the same time, our accusers were free from any fears of being censured for false and slanderous charges."

No one acquainted with Presbyterian government will deny, that there was a palpable violation of discipline. It is noticeable, that the prudent historian does not give this letter of remonstrance, and only alludes to it with a few sneers. Nor does he give the Commission's resolution respecting the *common fame* letter of Craighead and others, which worked so mighty a mischief. This has been given on page 354 of this work. Smith proves incontrovertibly, that in consequence of this the Synod appointed the Commission, by whose own showing the business came before them irregularly, they took it up irregularly; and the whole of their proceedings, from first to last, were irregular and unconstitutional.* What a strange but discreet omission by a historian of the church! Had not Dr. Davidson and Smith access to the very same records? But the former may have overlooked, while the latter specially noticed, the resolution which not only brings out the stubborn and humiliating fact concerning the *common fame* letter, but renders null and void the Commission's whole proceedings.

* Smith, pp. 611, 612.

endured the abhorred doctrines and practices of the New Lights, their renunciation of the authority of Synod, their formation of a new sect, &c. ; they were ready to stamp with reprobation and excision, any thing which bore the slightest resemblance to a movement which had occasioned them so much disquietude. The extracts which the historian has given from Lyle's Diary and Journal, show that there existed much irritation of feeling at the time ; of which the anti-revival party knew how to make a skillful use, and doubtless took a signal advantage.

“ In 1805, Mr. Lyle was appointed by the Synod to ride two months in the bounds of Cumberland Presbytery, and afterwards to sit as one of the Commission, on the difficulties of that body. Of this tour he kept a journal.” * His qualifications for sitting on those difficulties may be judged of by the extracts above alluded to : if a jurymen is to be set aside for having formed or expressed a previous opinion upon the merits of a cause, the party which had been cited before the Commission had many valid reasons for objecting to Mr. Lyle. But they did not object to him more than the others. If he had given his attention to both parties, instead of confining it so specially to the anti-revivalists, he might have become better qualified to adjudicate in the case. But this man who “ inherited all his father's pertinacity ” † — “ this man of moderate talents, not on a par with Campbell, Cameron, or even Rice ” ‡ — whose “ disposition was naturally amiable, though he had his weaknesses, and

* Dav. His., p. 118.

† Ib., p. 117.

‡ Ib., p. 119.

was occasionally betrayed into too passionate warmth," * at the end of his tour of *two months*, met the Commission, as he and others doubtless thought, thoroughly furnished for the important business.

Not much need be said concerning the proceedings of that body, which may safely be left to the judgment of impartial history. The best apology that can be made for them would seem to be, that they met together already disposed to take rigorous action; and being somewhat unskilled in ecclesiastical government, the practices and precedents of the evangelical church of Scotland, they were deceived and betrayed into the adoption of the cause of the anti-revival party. Craighead and his associates were fully sustained, while the revival party were sorely oppressed, and that, too, by men whom they truly loved, and justly regarded as real friends of truth and righteousness. In their deep affliction, these persecuted servants of the Lord Jesus could say with the Psalmist, "For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." †

Because the revival party of the Cumberland Presbytery refused to surrender all, whether ordained, licensed, or candidates, to the Commission for re-examination, that body cited all the original revival ministers

* Dav. His., p. 119.

† Psalms lv, 12, 13, 14.

to appear at the next Synod, to account for said conduct. And because the young men, when called on, refused compliance with this unconstitutional demand, believing as they did, that it would be a crime against God and a good conscience thus to betray and sacrifice the rights guaranteed by discipline to Presbyteries, to try and examine their own candidates; the Commission prohibited all, whether learned or less learned, "from exhorting, preaching, and administering ordinances, &c."* Thus, when southern Kentucky and Tennessee were overspread with one continuous flame of gracious influences, which these humble men had been the honored instruments in lighting up; while hundreds and thousands were rejoicing in hope, and calling these men their spiritual fathers; while other thousands, under conviction of sin, were crying to these servants of the living God to come to their aid, and show unto them the way of salvation, the Commission of the Kentucky Synod solemnly prohibited all from preaching and even exhorting. They doubtless thought that their prohibition would, and ought to be regarded. What reason had they to expect that this extensive field would not sink again into darkness and desolation, nor its inhabitants fall back into their former worldliness and infidelity? It is not owing to any plans or efforts of the Commission that these were not the dreadful results. Thanks be to him who inspired his afflicted servants with a zeal, firmness, and boldness to disregard so unreasonable a prohibition. "Troubled on every side, yet not dis-

* Dav. His., p. 239.

tressed ; perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ” — they formed themselves into a Council, abstaining from Presbyterian acts, and continued to preach and promote the revival, which continued to progress ; “ and numbers were added to the churches.” * Pious hearts will always sympathize with men suffering persecution for righteousness’ sake, but are too apt to forget how great objects of commiseration are the persecutors themselves. Indeed, the oppressor is more to be pitied than the oppressed ; the tyrant who kindles the fire more than the martyr who burns.

Messrs. Hodge and Rankin attended the meeting of the Synod of Kentucky, not in obedience to the Commission’s unconstitutional citation, but by advice of the Council, to effect a reconciliation. A committee appointed for the purpose conversed freely with them, and became “ convinced the charge of heresy was false.” But because they still adhered “ to the former determination, not to submit to the authority of Synod, exercised by their Commission, in silencing certain young men licensed and ordained by the Cumberland Presbytery ” † — the share which the Transylvania Presbytery had in making some of these preachers, before Cumberland Presbytery was ever constituted, must not be forgotten — Synod proceeded “ to suspend the said William Hodge and John Rankin from the exercise of all the functions of the gospel ministry, and from the sacraments of the church, until they manifest

* Dav. His, p. 243, and Smith, 614.

† Minutes of Syn., quoted by Smith.

repentance and submission.” * Every man who understands the discipline of the Presbyterian church must acknowledge with the late Dr. E. S. Ely, “that the suspension of these ministers was wholly unconstitutional, and ought to be held to be void.” † Should the inquiry arise, what could have possessed the Synod with a spirit of rancor, to adventure this and other tyrannical measures? it will be a sufficient answer, to say that Craighead and his partizans were there.

The Synod also dissolved the Cumberland Presbytery, and annexed its members to the Transylvania Presbytery. This measure was no violation of *the letter* of the Constitution. But was it according to its *spirit*? If it was adopted with an eye single to the glory of God and the peace and purity of the Church, it was certainly justifiable, by the spirit as well as the letter of the discipline. But if the design was to subject the revival ministers and all the young men to the domination of the anti-revival party, and to strengthen this party by joining them to Transylvania Presbytery, most of whose members had by this time become unfriendly to the revival, it was manifestly wrong; and a greater outrage upon justice could scarcely be perpetrated, nor a greater insult offered to the revivalists. But one desirous of vindicating the Synod might perhaps argue, that the Synod could have no such design, inasmuch as the case of the Council or of the revival ministers was beyond the control of a Presbytery, it having been already acted on by the Kentucky Synod, from whence it must go up by

* Minutes of Syn., quoted by Smith.

† Smith, 617.

appeal or remonstrance to the General Assembly. If the case should afterwards be submitted to Transylvania Presbytery, none could be so dull of understanding as to mistake the design of this re-annexation. The progress of events will solve the doubt.

The sanction of the General Assembly. The ample testimony borne by the General Assembly, in 1804, in favor of the genuineness of the revival, has already been referred to. At the General Assembly in May 1807, "the Cumberland case attracted much attention, and elicited a keen debate.* A letter from the General Assembly to the Kentucky Synod passed the following censure on the proceedings of the Synod and Commission: "Your proceedings in demanding that the young men irregularly licensed and ordained, be given up to your body for examination; in suspending the irregularly ordained ministers without process in their case; and in suspending Messrs. Hodge and Rankin, for not submitting to the re-examination of the young men, are at least of questionable regularity. They, therefore, advise that you seriously review the proceedings, and consider whether some of them ought not to be rescinded, and steps speedily taken to mitigate the sufferings, which your censure appears to have produced, and to remove, at least, a part of the complaint it has excited."

Thus spake the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, to the erring and ill-informed Synod of Kentucky. The whole letter is quite dignified, the language entirely courteous, the

* Dav. His., p. 246.

censure very mild ; but the recommendation to review, rescind, and to mitigate the sufferings was indeed too palpable and plain to escape the comprehension of Stuart, Blythe, Cameron, Lyle, or Wilson. Something very different from what proved the actual result might have been anticipated from these good men. But Craighead, Balch, Bowman, and their party, understood the nature of the censure and the advice equally well, and must have been aware that to rescind and to mitigate would tend to results, ruinous to their cause and prejudicial to their already declining reputations. And the Commission as well as the Synod, having adopted the cause of the opposition, and censured the revivalists, doubtless felt the necessity of arguments for their own justification. The opposition, favored beyond their hopes, would be likely to furnish all the plausible arguments which their party spirit had supplied them with, from the beginning of the revival. Hence, with respect to the revival party, the anti-revivalists and a majority of Kentucky Synod seem at this time to have taken the same stand, and to have imbibed a similar spirit. As might be expected, all the circumstances considered, the Synod, at their next meeting, "reviewed their proceedings ;" and a majority "re-affirmed all their decisions." * The historian records this, apparently without a blush ; and it is manifest that he does not merely excuse, but actually justifies the Synod. No one can doubt from whence he derived the materials which moulded his sentiments.

Further light may be shed on the views of this

* Dav. His., p. 247 and 248.

General Assembly, by the following extracts from a letter addressed to Mr. Hodge, about the same time :

“REV. AND DEAR SIR :— Although personally unknown to you in the flesh, I have a humble hope we may have drank in the same blessed Spirit. Mr. Trigg, of your country, can inform you of my character and standing in this place. I hold a humble membership in the First Presbyterian church in this city, formerly under the pastoral care of Rev. Dr. Ewing, deceased, now under the care of Rev. James P. Wilson.

“ The unhappy difference in your quarter of our church, so immediately succeeding what the great proportion of the Presbyterian interest in this place believed to be a great revival of the work of God, has excited deep concern, and our General Assembly have had the matter fully before them. It appeared to be the decided opinion of the majority in the General Assembly, that no Synod has a right to proceed against ministers or individuals, except the matter shall have come before them by appeal from a Presbytery — that only a Presbytery can call its members to account for errors in doctrine or practice — that a man once ordained by a Presbytery, is an ordained minister, though the Presbytery may have acted improperly in not requiring due qualification, and that even a Presbytery could not afterwards depose, but for cause arising or made public after ordination — that the licentiates are always in the power of their Presbytery to examine them and withdraw their licensures at discretion — but that a Synod may act against a Presbytery as such, by dissolving, dividing, censuring, &c.; consequently, that the dealings with Cumberland Presbytery were proper, in dissolving them and annexing them to Transylvania, but wholly improper in suspending ordained ministers, and still more improper was it for a Commission of Synod to do it. But, though the rule about knowledge of language, in our discipline is not often fully complied with, and though the rule is not found in the scriptures, yet it is so important, that, though your case was an imperious one, yet they seemed to fear you had gone too far, especially in the licensures. But what the General Assembly have finally done, will appear very inconclusive to these points, because they wished to avoid offending the Synod and Presbytery, and the minority in the Assembly took advantage of this to make

the business end as much as possible in such a manner as not to be construed against the power of Synods and General Assembly."

The amiable writer of the above letter next states that the General Assembly have questioned the regularity of the proceedings of the Kentucky Synod; and, after giving the names of some who "voted with the majority in this censure," as well as of some who opposed, and referring to his own name among the Trustees of the General Assembly, concludes with Christian courtesy and brotherly kindness.

Every attentive reader will perceive, how fully and unequivocally the General Assembly of 1807 sustained all the constitutional objections and complaints of the revival members of the Cumberland Presbytery, against the proceedings of the Commission, ratified by the Synod of Kentucky; and still how mildly and cautiously they inflicted their censure upon the Synod, with advice *to review, rescind and mitigate the suffering*. Had the Synod acted upon that advice, and done what the Assembly doubtless hoped and desired, the breach might have been healed, and a death blow struck to the triumphs of party spirit. But alas for the perverseness of our poor frail nature! It is often found easier for some good men to be betrayed into error, than to be persuaded by a higher authority — however mildly exercised — to repair their wrong doing.

The Council of revival ministers again addressed the General Assembly in the spring of 1808, praying for a redress of grievances; but the Assembly referred them "to the Synod itself as the only constitutional body

competent to reverse what they had done wrong." And the Assembly further add: "And in case they either refuse to review or rectify them (their own proceedings), you know it is your privilege to appeal to the General Assembly, who will then be empowered to act upon it." The historian speaks of the action in the case, as follows: "Dr. McKnight, Dr. Hall, and Dr. J. P. Wilson were appointed a committee to communicate this to the council; and to write also to the Synod. The letter to the Synod was much more in the tenor of reprehension than that of the preceding year, but although read and disputed by paragraphs, and approved by a great majority, it was finally deemed expedient not to send it, as it might only produce exasperation of feeling. After the adjournment of the Assembly, Dr. Wilson addressed a letter to Mr. Hodge in his own name,* expressive of strong sympathy, reflecting severely on the Synod; pronouncing the Commission unconstitutional; assuring him of the favorable sentiments of the Assembly; urging him to return and appeal regularly, although a disagreeable condescension; recommending the establishment of a grammar school; and *gently* advising adherence to the standards." †

It will be seen that this Assembly as fully sustained the constitutional objections and complaints of the revival ministers, against the unjust proceedings of the Synod and their Commission, as did the Assembly of the preceding year. The Synod being absent and unrepresented, the letter of the Committee was withheld, lest

* See Appendix, G.

† Dav. Hist., p. 249.

it "might exasperate some of them." But some may be disposed to inquire, why did not the Council or revival ministers take the steps recommended by Dr. Wilson, and appeal regularly to the General Assembly? This is easily answered: the revival ministers "were committed to the Presbytery of Transylvania to be dealt with; Messrs. Hodge and Rankin to be restored, if the way should be clear.* The effect of this was to place the revival ministers and all the young men under the iron heel of those very men who had been the inveterate opponents of themselves and the revival, for more than ten years, and had by this manœuvre gained an accession of numbers, sufficient to crush and overwhelm them. Now the design of dissolving and re-annexing the Cumberland Presbytery to the Transylvania, will scarcely escape any attentive reader. If lawful, it was not expedient. If constitutional, it was not just. This act of Kentucky Synod was perpetrated, or at least divulged, after the meeting of the General Assembly in the spring of 1808, and some months after Dr. Wilson's letter had been received. Had the Council or revival ministers intended to appeal regularly from the Synod to the General Assembly, they were now precluded from this by the insolent act of the Synod, "committing them to the Presbytery of Transylvania to be dealt with." Mr. Hodge who, in compliance with the invitation of this Presbytery, alone attended their meeting, at Glasgow, Ky., was informed by their committee appointed to converse with him, that "*the Presbytery was invested with full*

* Davidson's History, p. 248.

Synodical powers to act and decide upon his own case and that of his brethren." * A better evidence could not be afforded, that the majority of the Synod were rather deficient in the knowledge of their own church government, than this act, which, to say the least, was full of absurdity. As well might they invest a church session with full Presbyterian powers! The very suggestion excites a smile. But this unjust and ungenerous act excited no smiles among the revival ministers. They saw with grief and consternation that another constitutional principle was violated. And for what purpose? Of this they could judge only by the actual effect, which was no less than to commit their cause to be tried and themselves to be dealt with, by a party now in power; the most prominent and influential of whom had sent a *slandorous* letter to the Synod, by whose Commission they had been cited, tried, and condemned, some of them suspended, and nearly all the rest silenced; against which unconstitutional proceedings, they had been for years remonstrating and petitioning to the General Assembly. If they could forget that their revolutionary fathers resisted a pitiful tax, for the sake of principle — if they could submit to the humiliation of a trial and certain condemnation by the now dominant party, some of whom had been their opposers and calumniators for ten years — their next step must be an appeal to that very Synod who had twice unjustly condemned them, and now had "committed them to the Transylvania Presbytery to be dealt with," thus interposing embarrassments, delays,

* Smith's His., p. 630.

and obstacles to their regular appearance before the General Assembly. They might have submitted to the humiliation, but could not yield assent to the violation of principle. Noble, generous hearted men! They could be subjected to suffering, but not to sin.

The Council of revival ministers had forwarded a letter of remonstrance to the General Assembly of 1807; and that body had mildly censured the Kentucky Synod's proceedings, as being "at least of questionable regularity." They had sent a petition to the General Assembly of 1808, praying for the interference of that body in their behalf; and a great majority, taking the view of the case which the preceding Assembly had entertained, wrote a "letter to the Synod much more in the tenor of reprehension than that of the preceding year:"* this letter, on account of the Synod being absent and unrepresented, was not sent. And now to cut off any appeal from the Synod to the highest judicatory, the revival ministers "were committed to the Presbytery of Transylvania to be dealt with."† What more could they do? Must party spirit ever prevail, and opposition to the revival finally triumph? No: they could confide in the wisdom and justice of the Assembly. They had been taught by Dr. Wilson's letter to believe, that their grievances would have been redressed the year before, if the records of the Synod of Kentucky had been before the Assembly. Relying on the justice of their cause, they could await the decision of that body, which they confidently expected

* Dav. His., p. 249

† Ib. p. 243

would put an end to their embarrassments and afflictions. But they should have borne in mind that the Assembly, being a delegated body, is liable to be composed of different men in different years. Dr. Wilson had said to them in 1808, "it was chiefly with a view to your case, that I was in the Assembly this year." Perhaps the Council ought to have sent a delegation to the Assembly, not as members of the body, it is true, but as a party, praying for justice under their accumulated load of injuries, and having a right to be heard in their own defence. But whom could the Council have sent? Mr. McAdow was then suffering under bodily infirmity. Messrs. Hodge and McGee, though zealous and able ministers, and of priceless value to the revival, were perhaps never so powerful in debate, as some of those styled "the young men," had already become. Of the four who had been ordained previous to the dissolution of the Cumberland Presbytery, Messrs. Ewing and King were probably the only men who could have successfully defended the revival and the Council of ministers against the representations then made by the Kentucky Synod. Meek and gentle as they were, they feared not the face of man. They were not liable to be overawed by an array of numbers nor entangled by any kind of sophistry. All who have known them in later times and witnessed their power of argument and of eloquence, will decide that the cause would have been safe in their hands. Probably they were not thought of at the time, nor was any delegation deemed necessary.

What must have been the grief and disappointment of the Council, when they learned that this Assembly had sanctioned the proceedings of the Kentucky Synod? Truly they were driven to their closets and their knees. The church of their choice, to whose service they had devoted their lives, for whose sake they were willing to sacrifice all things, except a good conscience and the privilege of serving God and their generation in the work to which, they trusted, the Holy Ghost had called them, had cast them off, without process or form of trial. Without any charge of heresy or immorality, ordained ministers, licentiates, candidates and exhorters at one blow, were to have their mouths closed and their tongues paralyzed, so far as public instruction of the people was concerned, by ecclesiastical authority. They could but "weep between the porch and the altar," saying, "spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." * Must tens of thousands have no one to break to them the bread of life? They knew not how to live without it. Must the numerous churches throughout southern Kentucky, Tennessee and elsewhere, which had been organized from the fruits of the great revival, no more hear the gospel, or must they seek a connection with other denominations? They were Presbyterians from principle; besides they loved the men who had sought them out while in their ignorance and sin, and shown unto them the way of salvation. Must the churches invite the ministrations of Craighead, Bowman, Donnell, Templin and Balch? They had no desire to

* Joel ii, 17.

listen to any more declamations against the revival and its promoters. Must the New Light preachers who were sent among them, be allowed to beguile unstable souls and proselyte them to their pretended "new gospel?" None could expose their sophistries so triumphantly as their favorite preachers had often done. Must the sacramental and camp meetings be discontinued, and the multitudes who were groaning for redemption, have none to point them to the cross of Christ? Men had virtually so commanded; but Ewing, King and thousands more had responded, "we ought to obey God rather than men."* Must the revival cease, and all those prohibited from preaching and even exhorting go home, and devote themselves to secular employments? They could not. *They dared not.* THEY DID NOT. And the revival progressed with power; and very many were filled with joy and peace in believing. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

It may be necessary to inquire, by what means the sanction of the Synod's proceedings were obtained from the General Assembly of 1809? How did the Synod's demand, that the young men licensed and ordained be given up to their body for examination, find countenance from any one; when the Constitution gives to the Presbytery alone, the power to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry? † How did the Synod's suspension of ordained ministers without process in their case, meet the approval of any man who had ever read the form of process against a Bishop or Minister in the

* Acts 5, 29.

† Form of Government, Chapter x, Article 8.

discipline of his own church? How could the suspension of Messrs. Hodge and Rankin for not submitting to the re-examination of the young men, find a shadow of excuse among any class of Presbyterians, who were capable of reading the form of government of their own church, by which, power is expressly given to Presbytery, but to no other judicatory, "to examine and license candidates," as well as "to ordain, install, remove and judge ministers?"* How could all these unconstitutional acts, which, in 1807, were cautiously, but explicitly adjudged to be "at least, of questionable regularity," in 1809, become unquestionably regular? How could those same proceedings, which, in 1808, were deemed much more reprehensible than in the preceding year, in 1809 call forth the thanks of the General Assembly? Had the line of demarkation between truth and falsehood, in one short year, become blurred or blotted out? Had equity and iniquity lost their distinctive features? Had right and wrong exchanged places? Verily, no: men may change, but truth never. Justice is eternal and unchangeable. The courts may decide contrary to law; but then their verdicts are absolutely null and void. Even an Assembly of good men may be swayed by sympathy, and in a moment of excitement surrender constitutional principles to the tears and entreaties of an impassioned pleader; but future Assemblies, observing the rule of right, will not adopt such acts as precedents, but stamp them with discomfiture and disapprobation. The permanency of

* Form of Government, Chapter x, Article 8.

principle and its prevalence over passion may be eminently illustrated, by comparing the Assembly's act in the present case, with the act of the same body in the case of the Presbytery of Geneva, hereafter to be noticed.

Speaking of Mr. Lyle's "uncommon power of unlocking the fountains of feeling, and awakening a sympathetic interest in the bosoms of his auditors," the historian says: "Even the General Assembly were taken by surprise, in 1809, when he defended the Synod in the matter of the Cumberland Presbyterians. Bursting into tears, he made a most impassioned appeal, and the Assembly were so affected, that their final judgment was very different from that to which they had at first inclined." * Again, after stating that the Synod's two letters and minutes were "attentively considered by the next General Assembly," (1809,) "that Messrs. Lyle and Stuart were on the floor as Commissioners from Kentucky, having come, at great expense and self-denial, to defend the Synod;" that these good men "were somewhat awed by the array of learned doctors, &c.;" the historian significantly remarks: "They were still more disconcerted by observing the unfriendly eye with which the whole Assembly, with Dr. J. P. Wilson at their head, appeared to regard them. The prospect was at first gloomy and discouraging, &c." † The Synod must have seen the necessity of powerful efforts for their defence. And it is a little remarkable, that, after all the documents had been so attentively

* Dav. His., p. 119.

† Dav. His., p. 249.

considered, their prospects were so decidedly gloomy and discouraging. And still more remarkable was it, that so venerable and dispassionate a court of Jesus Christ "were taken by surprise;" and as Mr. Lyle "wept freely," "every heart was touched with profound sympathy." Dr. Davidson says, "Mr. Lyle, having overcome his awe, and yielding to his feelings, as was his wont, wept freely as he portrayed, in vivid colors, the probable effects of the discomfiture and disgrace of the friends of truth and order. A deep impression was made. Every heart was touched with profound sympathy."

Were it possible, at this distance of time, to examine the portrait drawn by Mr. Lyle, it is probable that some of its colorings would lose much of their vividness. The reader has already noticed the facts and arguments adduced, which will amply sustain the following positions. Mr. Lyle and other good men, in central and upper Kentucky, had been greatly afflicted and alarmed, as well they might be, by the erroneous doctrines and practices of the New Lights in their midst. Those who had opposed the revival from its commencement, taking advantage of their alarm, had, by erroneous representations, led them to confound the genuine revival with the excitement by which they were sorely annoyed; and by this means beguiled them into the adoption of their own unrighteous cause. This union of strength had probably prompted to the unconstitutional proceedings of Kentucky Synod by their Commission. Party spirit raged with a violence seldom witnessed in the

church, to the great grief of all godly men of both parties. Now great efforts were made to justify the Synod before the world and the highest judicatory. The Assembly were dissatisfied, and had expressed their dissatisfaction to the Synod. Now at this crisis, it may be asked, whether Mr. Lyle, in his portrait drawn for the Assembly's enlightenment, did, or did not, confound the Cumberland Presbyterians with the New Lights, and wield the aberrations of the latter to the prejudice of the former? In addition to a vast amount of presumptive evidence that he did so, many of the extracts from his Diary, given by the historian, go to establish the affirmative. The candid historian himself, deceived by these extracts, and other information equally fallacious, has fallen into the same error, as already noticed. Doubtless it was by these erroneous impressions, sustained by the tears and entreaties of this impassioned pleader in behalf of the Synod, that "even the General Assembly of 1809 were taken by surprise," and in an unguarded moment came to a decision directly at war with the Constitution of the church; palpably contradicting not only their deliberate judgments of the two preceding years, but a subsequent decision of the same body in 1816.

This latter decision deserves to be more particularly noticed. The case of the Cumberland Presbytery is essentially parallel with that of the Presbytery of Geneva. The former had ordained Finis Ewing and others, and admitted them constituent members of their Presbytery. The latter had so admitted Rev. Shepley

Wells.* The Synod of Kentucky assumed to have a right to reconsider, and, at the discretion of a Commission appointed for this purpose, to reverse the acts of the Cumberland Presbytery in the premises. But the Synod of Geneva, somewhat less arrogant or more scrupulous, or better informed, did not attempt to nullify or rescind Presbyterian acts, but ordered the Presbytery of Geneva to reconsider the case of Mr. Wells. It was justly argued that Synods were competent to censure Presbyteries as such, provided they actually had ordained and admitted unworthy characters. But that the right of judging of the characters and qualifications of all candidates for such admission belonged to Presbyteries, to which judicatures alone the Constitution had specially assigned that discretionary power; and when once admitted, no matter how improvidently, their decisions were valid and final. When individuals had been once admitted, they became members in full standing; nor could the

* In the minutes of the General Assembly, vol. iii, p. 235, may be seen the following in the report of a committee, appointed to examine the minutes of the Synod of Geneva; and its adoption by the Assembly does unequivocally sustain those constitutional principles, for which the Council of revival ministers of the Cumberland Presbytery so long and grievously suffered.

"Your committee doubted the correctness of the order given by the Synod to the Presbytery of Geneva, to reconsider their proceedings on the subject of the admission of Rev. Shepley Wells a constituent member of that Presbytery." "The Synod of Geneva were, beyond doubt, competent to censure the Presbytery of Geneva for admitting hastily, or on slight evidence, into their body an unworthy, or even a suspicious character. But it is, in the opinion of your committee equally clear, that the right of deciding on the

Presbytery, though it should reconsider, reverse its own decision, or in any way sever the member so admitted from their body, except by a regular process.

Thus did the General Assembly of 1809 sanction the proceedings of the Kentucky Synod, which were in direct violation of the most excellent, equitable, and scriptural system of ecclesiastical government in the world. The time has come when every sound Presbyterian who understands and loves the Constitution of his own church, must either be warily silent respecting the causes which led to the final separation in 1810, or candidly acknowledge with the late Dr. Ely, of Philadelphia, that “in these unhappy difficulties the Cumberland Presbyterians *have suffered great ecclesiastical wrongs.*” While however they maintain the right, let them forgive the wrong. While they are always ready to give a reason for their faith, let them avoid offence. While they reject the fatality of the Confession, let them exercise forbearance towards those who find it not therein.

fitness of admitting Mr. Wells, a constituent member of the Presbytery of Geneva, belonged to the Presbytery itself, and having admitted him, no matter how improvidently, that their decision was valid and final. The individual admitted became a member in full standing; nor could the Presbytery, though it should reconsider, reverse its own decision, or in any way sever the member so admitted from their body, except by a regular process.”

If a Presbytery cannot reverse her own decisions and silence ordained ministers, how much less can a Synod do it. And least of all how could a General Assembly be induced to sanction so tyrannical a measure? The General Assembly of 1816 have written in living letters, “TEKEL,” on the act into which the Assembly of 1809 were surprised.

Let Cumberland Presbyterians cultivate peace, charity and Christian kindness towards their brethren of other denominations, especially those of their mother church. If she has, by a few violent partisans, been betrayed into error in her dealings with their fathers, she has suffered for it many fold, in the dearth of revivals which seldom visited her during a tedious term of years. Let them venerate her as a mother still, for her wisdom and her work's sake. Let them imitate her in all that is right, but pursue a more excellent way in any thing discovered to be wrong. Let them, humbly relying on divine aid, emulate her in closet devotion, in family religion, in regular public worship, in private acts of benevolence, and the public advocacy and support of all the great religious charities, those holy enterprises of evangelical Christendom which under God are even now bearing the first fruits of the world's conversion. Let them extend the circulation of their religious periodicals, amply endow their University, Theological Seminary, Colleges, classical and primary schools. Let them thoroughly educate candidates for the ministry, and adequately support the pastors in their charges and missionaries in their fields. Let the reproach of ignorance never be cast upon a minister of Christ, nor the sin of his poverty and want be laid to the charge of those for whom he labors. Trusting in God, let every parent strive and teach his children to labor to become eminently pious and intelligent, growing in grace and the knowledge of the truth, becoming more and more pure in heart, holy in life, and abundant in labors of love. Presbyterians of all schools

are, in their benevolent efforts, conservative as well as aggressive. Theirs is a religion of principle as well as of action. Relying alone on divine truth, wielded by the divine Spirit, they engage in the divine work and labor for the divine glory. Prompted by God's word, let them aim at the upbuilding of his kingdom, and in all things be subject to his will.

It need not be concealed that, according to their comparative ratio of increase in times past, not many years will have elapsed before the Cumberland Presbyterians will out-number any other branch of the Presbyterian family. This, so far from prompting to pride and vain glory, should lead to humility and self-abasement. The beloved and lamented Ewing, from first to last, had strong confidence that God's approval and blessing had been and would continue to be with the church, in the founding of which he had been so prominent. But he greatly feared a spirit of pride and self-confidence. He dreaded nothing so much. He wrote in reference to this subject, near the close of his life: "On this account, I even sometimes tremble, while I rejoice at the almost unparalleled growth of our denomination." And his exhortation to all future generations of Cumberland Presbyterians is, "Be humble! BE HUMBLE! BE HUMBLE!"

A fearful responsibility rests upon their leading and influential ministers and members. To these the church now looks for those wise arrangements which will afford to all instruction in truth and righteousness. The church in future will hold these answerable for the

institutions and principles of action, designed to train up a people to serve their God acceptably and succeeding generations nobly. The future church will probably derive her conformation of character from the present. Long established principles, systems, and usages are held in veneration, and are not soon or easily forsaken. When this branch of the church shall number as many hundreds of thousands as she now does of thousands, it may be too late to form a new character; and if her character, already formed, shall be indifferent or decidedly unworthy, the attempt to reform may be hopeless. Then the light of her genius may have departed, and the hope of her promise have passed. Then God may remove her candlestick out of his place, except she repent. But a brighter augury may be taken, and a higher destiny anticipated.

The ways of God are well ordered and sure. The history of his church, from the time of his covenant with Abraham till the present, is truly instructive, showing his dealings with the obedient as well as the rebellious. Columbus discovered a new continent. The Puritan fathers, fleeing from religious persecution, established themselves here. The God of their worship was with them, and they prospered. The patriots of the revolution freed them from the yoke of tyranny. A government was formed, guaranteeing all the blessings of civil and religious liberty. The Alleghanies were crossed; and a tide of immigration flowed into the Mississippi valley. A gracious work of God commenced, about the beginning of the nineteenth century, on the then western frontier,

which has now become the centre of American civilization. The persecuted and afflicted promoters of this revival were driven by ecclesiastical tyranny, as a sect every where spoken against, to constitute a little church, truly American in its origin and evangelical in its character. The weak having grown strong, and the few become many, the providence of God now disclosed the hidden wealth of California; and great multitudes rushed to the land of gold. The coast of the Pacific has become an exceedingly interesting field for American enterprise and Christian benevolence. Thousands from the pagan nations of Asia and the isles of the sea, to whom the word of life had been sent in stinted measure and at immense cost, are now flocking to these shores, to receive it without limit and almost without expense. The vast western wilderness, now the home of savages and haunt of wild beasts, will soon be converted, by Anglo-Saxon enterprise and industry, into fruitful fields, the inheritance of civilized men. Shall they be Christian? This is a question to be well pondered, and speedily answered, by the friends of God and humanity. Cities in the west are already rising, and others still will rise, rivaling those in the east in population, wealth, and business. Shall the altar of devotion and the temple of God be there? Shall the Sabbath become joyful at the sound of the church-going bell, and the streets be thronged with the frequenters of worshipping assemblies? It is for the lovers of Christ to determine. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."

* 2 Cor. xvi, 22.

maran-atha." And who can enjoy greater advantages for missionary labors, in these whitening fields, than the Cumberland Presbyterians? Who have stronger inducements or higher encouragements? Who ought to be more deeply impressed with a sense of their obligations? Born in a revival, and having long struggled with opposition, it may be that the Lord has raised up this church, and "established her goings," at a time and place the most favorable for success in this vast field. Let the church arise in her full strength, and her united energies be engaged. Truly "the Lord hath been mindful of us; he will bless us." "He hath not dealt so with any nation." Let us plan wisely, labor diligently, but pray submissively. For it is "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

A.

Letter of the Council of revival ministers to the General Assembly of 1807.

REV. FATHERS AND BRETHREN:—We have neither the pleasure nor advantage of being known by face to any of you. Common fame may have borne our names unto you, and some part of our conduct under unfavorable coloring. If not, you will shortly hear of us through the medium of the Kentucky Synod. We are known at a distance by the title (though falsely so called) of the majority of Cumberland Presbytery. We are a few brethren who labor under grievances occasioned by the Synod of Kentucky, neither can we indulge one hope of having them removed by that reverend body.

As our local situation renders the personal attendance of any of us at the General Assembly almost impracticable, we take this as our only alternative, to present unto you, as guardians under Christ of that branch of the church to which we belong, our humble petition for a redress of our grievances.

That you may have a just view of our situation and distress, we humbly conceive it necessary to give you a brief history of facts, relative to our present ease, as they transpired in this country. We therefore beseech you to hear us patiently. We had the happiness, the most of us, of having removed to this country before, and in, that ever memorable year 1800, when the gracious work of God broke out in such power amongst us. There were but four Presbyterian ministers who were truly friendly to the revival in the bounds of West Tennessee and West Kentucky—two in each. While we preached the same doctrines we had years before—the doctrines of the Bible and our Confession of Faith—the Spirit of the Lord accompanied the word with unusual power to the hearts of the people. The effects of this divine energy were quickly manifested by most awful outcries for mercy—by falling down, speechless and motionless, in many

cases for hours. When speech and a degree of thought were recovered, the most open and full confession of sin, and importunate entreaties for pardon were made. Such cries, accompanied with struggles for faith as the gift of God, we never heard nor saw before. Many who had been subjects of conversion years before, but in a less visible manner, were astonished and confounded, while they beheld such unusual exercises, and knew not what all would issue in, but were often afraid, in distraction and confusion. Sometimes while our tears and cries were mingling with those of the mourners, for mercy upon them, with pleasing amazement we could perceive the Day Spring from on high was visiting them. The opening views they then expressed of the gospel scheme of salvation — the fullness, suitableness and freeness of Christ — his ability to save — the beauty of holiness, the preciousness of God's word — the truth of his promises — the equity of his law — the hatefulness of sin, on which they could with eloquence expatiate, on the full return of bodily strength and activity — their sympathizing concern for the unconverted — their persuasive arguments to come to Christ — their love to God, his people, and cause — the transports of joy and holy delight with which they were filled, expressed in shouts of praise to him who had washed them in his blood — would have convinced. (yea, actually did many,) a deist, that none but a Divine Agent could produce such happy effects. When we add, the holy, upright, self-denying lives which numbers manifest to this day, every shadow of doubt disappears. The work broke out nearly in the centre of our country. The unusual exercises and appearances were soon noised abroad. Our sacramental occasions were attended by vast multitudes, and remarkable tokens of God's presence and power. Numbers came out to see. Here were deists, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, and all the different characters that compose the great class of the wicked. Many of them fell under deep convictions, and to all appearance became the happy subjects of conversion. Some of them who came from afar, when they returned home, immediately began to exhort their families and neighbors to seek salvation. They appointed meetings for prayer. The Lord remarkably blessed those meetings in the conviction and conversion of many. Thus, in a few months, the blessed work spread like a rapid flame from the centre to the circumference of our country. The attention of all our inhabitants appeared to be aroused.

Now, truly the harvest was great and the laborers few. Unable to resist the pressing solicitations from every quarter for preaching, with unutterable pleasure we went out, laboring day and night,

until our bodies were worn down, and after all we could not supply one-third of the places calling upon us for preaching. While thus engaged, and the gracious work still going on, we observed what was very remarkable, that in almost every neighborhood there was some one who appeared to have uncommon gifts for exhortation and prayer, and were zealously engaged in the exercises thereof, while the Lord wrought by them to the conversion of many. Viewing the infant state of the church in our country, the anxious desire for religious instruction, the gifts, diligence, and success of those we have mentioned, and the scriptural authority for exhortation, we were induced with almost every member in the Presbytery, to open a door for the licensure of exhorters. Well knowing it was a liberty that was, and would be taken; and concluding if taken by Presbyterial authority it might prevent disorder and weakness. It was now agreed that any of those who might be licensed, and manifested extraordinary talents and piety, should be considered as candidates for the ministry: also, that for their improvement they should have subjects appointed, on which they were to be heard at our stated sessions of Presbytery; that if, by their improvement, piety and usefulness, they purchased to themselves a good degree, they might be set apart to the holy ministry. Accordingly, several made application, who were examined on experimental religion, and the motives inducing them to public exhortation. Those we judged qualified were then licensed. The first were all men of families and somewhat advanced in years. Out they went, leaving wives and children, houses and lands, for Christ's sake and the gospel; suffering hunger, cold, and weariness, for weeks in succession, but the Lord was with them and made them happy instruments in helping on his work in the conversion of many. After a long trial of those men in different parts of our country, there came forward to our Presbytery several petitions for their licensure to the ministry, signed by hundreds of the most moral and religious characters where they had labored.

From our personal knowledge of those men's good talents, piety, and usefulness; from the numerous warm petitions of the people at large—from the example of many Presbyteries—from the silence of scripture on literary accomplishments—from your own declaration in answer to Mr. Rice's letter, viz.: "That human learning is not essential to the ministry"—from the exception made in the book of discipline, in extraordinary cases; we humbly conceived, that it would not be a transgression either of the laws of God or the rules of the church, to license

men of such a description. We therefore did license them, and a few others at different times afterward: some of them with, and some without literary acquisitions; but all men of gifts, piety, and influence, having spent years previous in exhortation, before they were admitted to the ministry. Several were licensed to exhort, whose names are on our minutes, whom we never had a design of admitting to the ministry. Now, the work of the Lord went on.

Numbers of young, promising congregations were formed and regularly organized. The Lord added to them such we hope, as shall be saved. So that, in the course of a few years the wilds of our country echoed with the praises of the Lord. Savage ignorance was changed into a knowledge of God and his dear Son; and savage ferocity into the lamb-like spirit of Jesus. Truly the wilderness and solitary place appeared to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. The parched ground became a pool, and the thirsty land, springs of water.

Thus, while the glorious work prevailed, love and harmony abounded amongst ministers, exhorters, and people. A few of our opposing brethren in the Presbytery, carried up to the Synod of Kentucky, a common fame letter, formed by themselves. In this letter, they grossly misrepresented our characters, conduct, and the doctrines we taught. Although they were eye and ear witnesses of all we did in a Presbyterian capacity, yet they stated them as circulating reports, and declared at the same time, that they did not offer them as complaints, nor feel themselves bound to support those charges. This was in the year 1803. In 1804, a Commission composed of a part, and authorized by the Synod of Kentucky invested with full power to adjudicate upon, and finally decide on our case, were sent down among us. Ministers and exhorters were all ordered to appear at their bar. We appeared accordingly, and produced the minutes of our Presbytery, and expected them to serve as written testimony of facts. But the Commission paid very little regard to them. They took the common fame letter, formed their docket from it, and arranged their charges against us in the same order they stood in the letter. We plead to be taken on our minutes, which were written testimony of all we had done. And, if they took us upon that letter, that they would call forward the authors thereof, who had subscribed their names to it, and agreeably to discipline, on charges exhibited against a gospel minister, require them to support these charges, or stand liable to censure for slanderous reports. But the Commission, regardless of all our entreaties,

commanded us to order. This was the ground on which we were taken : consequently called upon to answer for holding and preaching false doctrines, giving unjust judgment, licensing not only unlearned, but men of immoral characters, to exhort and preach. At the same time our accusers were free from any fears of being censured for false and slanderous charges. Although nothing in any nor all the charges brought against us, either were or could be proven in the smallest degree, except that of licensing unlearned men to preach, which every member in Synod knew years before, yet were we treated with the utmost severity. Threatened with Synodical power, and told to remember we stood at their bar : when, with meekness and sincerity we offered any thing for our defence, such reflections and misconstructions were cast upon it, as would have been truly grating to a well informed, polite ear, from gentlemen of the bar — much more so, when coming from the ministers of the meek, forbearing Redeemer to their unprovoking and uncondemned brethren. The Commission formed a resolution that we should give up all our licentiates fully to their power to be dealt with as they saw proper. To this we neither did nor could accede, because, as a Presbytery, we had a right to examine and license our own licentiates. Upon this the Commission in a very awful and public manner forbade all our licentiates, preachers and exhorters, any more to speak in the name of Jesus as public teachers, and cited us to the next annual session of Synod in October, 1806 : the whole of us for not submitting to the authority of the Commission, and three of us for false doctrines. Conscious of it being our right, as a Presbytery, to examine our own candidates, and well knowing the unspotted characters of those we had licensed — their good natural endowments, piety, and usefulness, the destitute and dangerous state of the societies under our care, we encouraged our licentiates to comply with the entreaties of the people, (many of whom were present by their representatives at the session of the Commission) to go and labor amongst them as formerly. You will be told that they were not regularly licensed, having only received the Confession of Faith partially, but the fears which caused that exception, rose merely from the concise manner in which the highly mysterious doctrines of divine decrees is there expressed, which was thought led to fatality. So far are they and we from rejecting either the doctrines or discipline therein contained, that every preacher and exhorter in our connexion have adopted and received the Confession, firmly persuaded that it contains the best system of scripture doctrines and discipline of any known

by us upon earth — but not so sacred nor infallible as the scriptures. Having never once meditated nor desired to become a new party, nor to produce secession in the church, we have not constituted as a Presbytery, since the Commission silenced our licentiates, neither do we mean to constitute, until our circumstances render it necessary; or until every hope fails of having our rights as a Presbytery restored, and grievances redressed by the interposition and authority of your reverend body.

In order to prevent divisions and falling a prey to numerous sectaries, we found it necessary that ministers, and the people by their representatives, should meet occasionally in form of a Council, to help on the now laboring cause of God amongst us, until in his gracious providence our situation may be changed. At those meetings, all our licentiates have cheerfully submitted to a re-examination upon divinity as taught in our shorter catechism; also upon English grammar and other useful studies.

Domestic circumstances permitted only two of us complying with the citation by the Commission of Synod in October, 1806. When our business came on, the first charge was for false doctrines, viz: denying the doctrine of election, and holding that every man is born with a seed of grace, which if improved will lead to glory. Well knowing that this was a common fame charge, and that no person on earth could support it against us; and also, that according to discipline, we ought first to have been called before the Presbytery to which we belonged, (but never were) yet we cheerfully submitted to be examined by Synod. A committee was appointed for that purpose. We had a free conversation upon doctrine; and, from every appearance, the committee in a very short time was fully satisfied that the charge was false. We told them, and now declare, that so far are we from denying the doctrine of election, that we firmly believe it a doctrine of the Bible, and so highly mysterious that we are unable fully to comprehend it. We utterly deny that man is born with a seed of grace, but firmly believe that he is born with a principle of enmity against God, which, if not removed by regeneration, will lead to destruction. Synod required our reasons for not submitting to the authority of their Commission. We gave them as above stated. They then called upon us to deliver up our licentiates to them, to be treated as they might judge proper. We answered, we could not see it consistent with discipline to make a demand on our Presbyterial rights, unless we by mal-conduct, had forfeited them. They then told us we must and should give them up, or suffer suspension. We answered, that according to the express letter of discipline

on the powers of the Presbytery, we had a right to examine, license, and ordain our candidates, and therefore could not, on the principles of discipline, give them up; also, that on the principles of their demand, every thing that we might hereafter do in a Presbyterian capacity, (though strictly up to discipline.) was a mere nullity unless it met with their approbation. Upon this we were suspended from the performance of every part of our ministerial office and the communion of the church, until we manifest repentance.

When we returned home and informed our people, they universally expressed their disapprobation and earnestly besought us to continue our labors as formerly amongst them. Knowing, that through grace, we had been kept from immoral conduct, making divisions, or propagating false doctrines, we yielded to their entreaties, humbly believing that in so doing, we would not violate our ordination vows; for the scriptures as well as discipline, teach that nothing but immorality, heresy and schism merit suspension — none of which did the Synod appear even to suspect us for, or charge us with, as the cause of our suspension; but solely for not submitting to their authority. Thus, Synod, by their Commission, silenced all our licentiates. They, themselves suspended us, and thereby left every congregation in our bounds at once destitute of all public means of grace, and exposed to the ravages of various sectaries.

Thus have we given you as concise and just a statement of our conduct, circumstances, and distresses as we can. Reverend fathers and brothers, we now earnestly entreat your immediate interposition on our case; for it will not with safety admit delay. We humbly hope, from the view you now have of our distresses, you will sympathize with us. By your authority we pray that the prohibition may be taken off our licentiates, and the suspension from us: that you restore our Presbyterian rights, never forfeited, but wrested from us; and appoint us a Presbytery, as there are bounds and members sufficient for two. We never have embraced the idea of an unlearned ministry. The peculiar state of our country and extent of the revival, reduced us to the necessity of introducing more of that description than we otherwise would. We sincerely esteem a learned and pious ministry, and hope the church will never be left destitute of such an ornament. Be assured that we feel ourselves equally bound, and as strongly disposed to maintain the peace and purity of the church, the dignity and influence of her ministers, as the Synod of Kentucky.

We have our struggles to prevent the separation of many

respectable members from our church, through their resentment to the Synod for its acts towards us. Our most quieting persuasive with them is, never let us make divisions, nor separate from the church to which we belong, but lay our distresses before the General Assembly, and wait the issue. So that if our grievances are not redressed, our rights restored and established by your speedy interposition and authority, every respectable Presbyterian congregation in Cumberland and the barrens of Kentucky, will be struck off from your connexion. We humbly trust that you will not view this as a challenge, but a piece of honest information to prevent an evil we sincerely deprecate. If you grant our petition, you will thereby cement all the above, to the church over which, under Christ, you preside. Entitled, we firmly believe, to the blessing of peace-makers and healers of such a dangerous breach, you will give joy and gladness to thousands, excite praise and thanksgiving to the Lord amongst all our societies — have their blessing upon, and their prayers for you in all your deliberations, and from none more sincerely than your distressed subscribing brothers.

C

From the Presbyterian Herald.

REV. JAMES MCGREADY.

MR. EDITOR: I feel constrained, from a sense of duty to the worthy dead, to ask a place in the columns of your useful periodical, while I attempt to remove a disgraceful stain which is left — unintentionally no doubt — on the good name of the late Rev. Jas. McGready, by the author of the “History of the Presbyterian Church, in Kentucky.” A book, though written with great fluency and fine style, yet, we regret to say, that it abounds almost in endless mistakes, incorrect statements, and which ought never to have been made, and which a careful expurgation would greatly enhance the value of a second edition.

“Riding on a cool day,” says the respected historian, “with an empty stomach and but recently recovered from a bilious fever, he (Rev. James McGready) was induced by a couple of wicked men in company to drink more liquor than he was able to bear, and became shamefully intoxicated.” This, says the history,

"occured in 1810." It is a mistake as to date. It must have been in the fall or close of the year 1806. It was in February, 1807, two or three days after the "Cold Friday," on which day I remember well of riding thirty-five miles, facing the wind in the then open Barrens, on the business specified by our historian, as follows: "In the year 1807, he (McGready) was accused of fraudulent conduct in regard to a certain piece of property in Russellville." "Messrs. Robertson, Cleland, and Rice" — not David Rice, but Claibourne Rice, Ruling Elder — "investigated the matter, as a committee of Transylvania Presbytery." The testimony of some of the most respectable men on the ground "gave Mr. McGready the most exalted character."

It was on this occasion, that Mr. McGready confidentially communicated to brother Robertson and myself the unpleasant affair of his intoxication. It was in substance as follows: He stated that he was recently on a missionary tour in Southern Indiana or Illinois. That he was compelled to ride a considerable distance in the morning before he could obtain his breakfast, which, as I understood him, was in the vicinity of his appointment for the day, and at the house of a friend. No account of two sons of Belial with him. It was, as will be recollected, in the by-gone days — such as we hope will never return — when the sweetened *dram* well mixed with honey or the sugar bowl, or any way you liked it, was the first and indispensable part of the hospitality of a friendly house. This being offered to our worthy brother, who, not suspecting any danger, took, as on ordinary occasions, the deceitful beverage on an empty stomach after a long fast, and before he was aware the intoxicating influence suddenly affected his head, so that he soon became prostrate under its deleterious operation. That he was deeply mortified and overwhelmed with grief and shame no one who knew the man will question for a moment. But that "he spent some weeks in a state of anguish almost comparable to the torments of the damned," as our historian says, we rather incline to think it an exaggeration. At least the account given by the relator did not so impress my mind. He also read to us his "written covenant," alluded to by the historian, "binding himself never to taste spirituous liquors again, to prepare for the press an earnest warning against their use, to observe every month" — this is incorrect, it should be every year — "the day of his fall as a day of fasting, humiliation," &c. He likewise read to us the "earnest warning" prepared for the press, the same as published in the volume of his sermons. The reason for this confidential communication was, as he informed us, to have our opinion and

advice as to the propriety of his making public a plain and candid statement of the whole affair, accompanied by explanations, warnings, &c., as might be considered appropriate or necessary. He was promptly answered in the negative. That, as the affair had not yet been noised abroad, that as public rumor had not yet hold of it, that even where it happened it made no noise, that the winds had not yet wafted it to Kentucky, and that therefore to state it himself would be impolitic, imprudent, and do more harm than good, by giving it an unnecessary, injurious publicity. It was time enough to do that when it should, if ever, become necessary.

I would add, that I have made this statement voluntarily, without consulting Mr. Robertson, for want of opportunity. But if his memory serves him, he will, I think, concur in what I have said. In conversation with a pious friend several months ago, Mr. Asa Farrar, he confirms my statements exactly, having received the same from Mr. McGready himself before his death. Were I acquainted with any of Mr. McGready's posterity, I would have addressed them instead of adopting the present method, that they might do with it as to them might seem proper. If Dr. Davidson should determine to publish another edition of his history, it would be gratifying to many in Kentucky if he would leave out the doggerel rhymes of drunken Tom Johnson against the patriarch of Kentucky Presbyterians, the Rev. David Rice, and especially section iii, page 133, respecting the "*Too Free Communication of the Sexes.*" The picture of Presbyterianism in Kentucky is, in all conscience, dark enough without that feature. It is calculated to feed the licentious, confirm the infidel, and disgust our sons and daughters, who were unborn at that time. The article, too, I believe to be unnecessarily exaggerated. — That an improper use has already been made of it we are not without evidence.

THOS. CLELAND.

D.

Rev. James McGready.

The following is a very just exhibit of the character of this holy and eminently useful minister of Jesus Christ, written by Rev. John Andrews:

From the conduct and conversation of Mr. McGready, there

is abundant evidence to believe that he was not only a subject of divine grace and unfeigned piety, but that he was favored with great nearness to God and intimate communion with him. Like Enoch, he walked with God; like Jacob, he wrestled with God, by fervent persevering supplications, for a blessing on himself and others, and prevailed; like Elijah, he was very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, and regarded his kingdom as the great end of his existence on earth, to which all other designs ought to be subordinate; like Job, he deeply abhorred himself, repenting, as it were, in dust and ashes, when he was enabled to behold the purity of God and his own disconformity to his holy nature; like the apostle Paul, he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, his Lord; and, like him, he felt great delight in preaching to his fellow-men the unsearchable riches of Christ. He was remarkably plain in his dress and manners; but very familiar, communicative, and interesting in his conversation. He possessed a sound understanding, and a moderate share of human learning. The style of his sermons was not polished, but perspicuous and pointed; and his manner of address was unusually solemn and impressive. As a preacher, he was highly esteemed by the humble followers of the Lamb, who relished the precious truths which he clearly exhibited to their view; but he was hated, and sometimes bitterly reproached and persecuted, not only by the openly vicious and profane, but by many nominal Christians, or formal professors, who could not bear his heart-searching and penetrating addresses, and the indignation of the Almighty against the ungodly, which, as a son of thunder, he clearly presented to the view of their guilty minds from the awful denunciations of the word of truth. Although he did not fail to preach Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to laboring and heavy laden sinners, and to administer the consolation which the gospel speaks to humble believers; yet he was more distinguished by a talent for depicting the guilty and deplorable situations of impenitent sinners, and the awful consequences of their rebellion against God, without speedy repentance unto life and a living faith in the blood of sprinkling. There is reason to believe that his faithful and indefatigable labors in the gospel of Christ were crowned with a great degree of success, and that he was honored as an instrument in the conviction and conversion of many sinners, and more especially in the commencement and progress of several powerful revivals of religion, in different places, during which he labored with distinguished zeal and activity.

We shall conclude our remarks by observing, that some of the

traits in Mr. McGready's character as a Christian, which are worthy of our imitation, were his fervent piety, his unaffected humility, his earnest, persevering supplications at the throne of grace, his resignation to the will of God under the afflictions, bereavements and poverty, with which he was tried in this world, his cheerful reliance on God's kind and watchful providence and confidence in his great and precious promises, and his contempt of the pomp and vanities of this world, to which he seemed to be, in a great degree, crucified. And, as a minister of the gospel, he ought to be imitated in his regard to the honor of God and the salvation of souls, his vigorous and zealous exertions to promote these grand objects, his fidelity in declaring the whole counsel of God, and his patience in bearing the revilings of the ungodly.

E.

Circular to the Ministers, Elders, and Members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

MY BELOVED BRETHREN:—The time has been, I know, when my counsels and warnings would have some influence on the members of our church; when we mingled our tears and prayers together with all the tenderness of Christian sympathy and fraternal affection. Though some of those with whom I have labored, prayed and agonized in times of sore trial, and deep distress, have gone to their reward; yet some remain to this day, engaged in doing and suffering Jehovah's will. These I can address with my accustomed frankness. To these I can appeal with Christian confidence. I know them; for our intercourse has been sweet and impressive in times of sorrow as well as of joy. I cannot be mistaken in them; for I have often witnessed the trial of their allegiance to God and the church, not only in prosperity but in adversity. To these I can speak with honest confidence and affectionate solicitude, as I did in days past, when we took "sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company."

But since our church has rapidly increased in numbers and extended itself through the whole Mississippi Valley, and beyond the Alleghany Mountains—since with many ministers and people who now belong to the church, I have no acquaintance—especially since I recollect, what poor human nature is, and how

it was acted out on some occasions, towards even the great, the wise, and holy Apostle Paul, which led him to say, "*once* you would have given me your very eyes. Am I therefore to become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" I have hesitated about writing this communication. But I have determined to make one more appeal to you all, in the simplicity and sincerity of my heart.

I have recently learned, with great surprise and astonishment, that our College, our *one* and *only* College, is in danger of passing into other hands, for want of patronage from our denomination!!! Will this be, can this be permitted to take place by our people? I trust not. I will not believe it, till forced to do so by the shameful and disgraceful apathy of our people. What! our whole denomination not, (I will not say able,) not willing to endow, sustain, cherish and support *one* high school, conducted by our own faithful and qualified ministers, for the benefit of our church! Let such a suicidal thought never be entertained for a moment. I will never consent to surrender that scriptural and happy provision, in our discipline, which allows gifted men, with a good English education to be ordained ministers in our church. But, it is too late in the day to deny or blink at the fact, that our church must have a portion, and goodly portion too, of thoroughly educated ministers, or we cannot sustain ourselves; while all other denominations are multiplying College after College, endowing them, supporting them, sending their children to them, and educating a large portion of their ministry in them. Damning heresy, too, is increasing and dares to appeal to original languages, literature, &c., to support it! It must be met on its own appeal. Moreover, literature is rapidly increasing among the community, and we must keep pace with this improvement, in our church. Are our principles worth maintaining? Do we hold, and have we taught the truth? Has not, and does not God own the doctrines we have preached? Are not our doctrines supported, or were they not taught by the early fathers of the Christian church? In short, are they not supported by the holy book of God?

I will now touch some of the prominent causes why our College has not been, and is not now supported as it should be.

First. The plan was an experiment—and though happily conceived and proposed by its excellent president, those engaged in conducting the farm, the finances, &c., &c., lacked experience in the new system, and the result was, it soon became a sinking concern; and with all the sacrifices of the president and professors, (and they were great) the repeated exertions of the church,

and calls on her liberality, it seemed that it must go down; until an association of benevolent brethren and other friends to literature, determined to assume all the debts and take the management of it in their own hands.

Secondly. Since that time the church has been resting in comparative security, supposing now all was well, and would be well—and has not exerted her influence sufficiently in favor of the institution.

Thirdly. There has always been in and out of the church, (sometimes greater, sometimes less,) a strange, unnatural, and to my mind, criminal negligence in sending on students—and even a disposition has been manifested, nay, acted out, to send their children to other institutions of learning, belonging to other denominations rather than our own! What other denomination in the whole world does so? This has been, and now is, a vital cause why our College is in danger. I ask again, is this cause not most unnatural and suicidal? Does it not evince a wonderful want of foresight? Are we not virtually saying, let all other denominations have a learned ministry but our own, and we will help them on with our money, &c.?

Fourthly. Our College is not, as all other prosperous Colleges are, endowed with permanent funds. Any seminary of learning, entirely dependent on tuition fees, must be often in jeopardy, and liable to sink. Owing to the caprice of parents, guardians, and students, the number of pupils will fluctuate, and often threaten, by that means, the very existence of any institution, which is thus dependent. Therefore, there is an absolute necessity of a permanent fund, the interest of which will always procure the services of a competent president, and the necessary number of able professors. We have such men in our church, whose services can be procured at a fair reasonable compensation, who would do honor to any learned institution. "Flattery is falsehood:" therefore, I do not flatter when I distinctly declare, that in my opinion, the president of Cumberland College, has evinced a rare, religious, patriotism, in continuing at the head of that institution, when he had to undergo, on many occasions, so much mortification of his feelings, as well as great pecuniary loss. And were I permitted to choose through the width and breadth of our America, I have no knowledge of any one that I would prefer to him for the place he fills. By bearing this candid testimony in behalf of the president, I would not be understood as disparaging the professors that have been or now are employed in the College. Far otherwise. The most of them were most excellent men, and it is to be deeply regretted, that

necessity compelled some of them to leave the institution. Shall these things continue? They must often occur, at least without a permanent fund — whose principal shall never be touched, and whose interest shall be exclusively applied for the salaries of the president and professors. Then tuition-fees, might be applied to the improvement and extension of the buildings, the increase of the library and apparatus, and the gradual increase of the permanent fund.

But, do you ask how shall this fund be raised? I answer, let the church, the whole church, nay, half the church *will* it, and it can be raised in a week! The interest on *one hundred thousand dollars* would be entirely ample, (vested in safe and profitable stock,) to employ and sustain a president and all necessary professors, through all time. And could not that sum be raised? It would amount to but a fraction more than one dollar for each member of our church! Then, my dear brethren, will we, can we permit our College, located most favorably, in the centre of our denomination, to pass into the hands of another denomination, which is willing amply to support it, a denomination not much, if any, superior to our own in numbers — and which already has under its care several Colleges and other institutions of learning — a denomination, too, which as a body, (there are some honorable exceptions,) you have not recognized as zealous experimental preachers — will we permit such a catastrophe, which would fix an indelible stain on our whole church, and cause us to become a by-word? I cannot, I will not believe it. Then let every minister, elder, and other prominent member of the church, from Pennsylvania to Texas, commence immediately; give what he can himself, and collect what he can from his brethren and other friends to learning in ready cash, as a part of the permanent fund, and bring or send it to the General Assembly; and while they are collecting, inquire how much can be raised by semi, or annual subscription, for said fund. And then let the report be made to the General Assembly, for their action.

Brethren, I am not wealthy, as some at a distance have supposed — for conscience sake, I have made a large sacrifice of my property; * moreover, I have many indigent orphan children, and near relations, whom I feel bound to aid in a pecuniary way, and in their education. Yet I am willing to throw in my mite to accomplish an object that lies so near my heart; and which I believe will be productive of so much good to the world, and particularly to our own denomination; and which I believe God will not only approve, but, which I think HE requires at our

* The allusion is, doubtless, to the emancipation of his slaves.

hands. Then, if the brethren, through their delegates at the next General Assembly, determine to raise the fund of which I have been speaking, not less than \$50,000, nor more than \$100,000 — I will bind myself and heirs, out of my *own money*, (and collect what I can besides,) to pay \$250 towards the first \$50,000, and \$250 towards the second \$50,000, or in that proportion, at such time or times as the General Assembly may prescribe — aggregate \$500. Paul says, “for we brought nothing into this world, and it is *certain* we can carry nothing out.”

I would respectfully suggest the propriety of all our Presbyteries, taking this matter into serious consideration, and have that *action* on it which the crisis demands.

I hope to see many of you at the Assembly, but if I should not be there, should the Lord spare me, I do, and will hope, I shall hear of some decisive action in this matter, and that of a paper, an organ for our whole church, which will be honoring to God, beneficial to his church, and give joy to every true-hearted Cumberland Presbyterian: May the Great Head of the church, even Jesus, bless you and yours — Amen.

FINIS EWING.

F.

Narrative of the Commencement and Progress of the Revival of 1800; by the late Rev. JAMES MCGREADY, in a letter to a friend.

LOGAN COUNTY, KY., OCT. 23, 1801.

BUT I promised to give you a short statement of our blessed revival; on which you will at once say, the Lord has done great things for us in the wilderness, and the solitary place has been made glad; the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.

In the month of May, 1797, which was the spring after I came to this country, the Lord graciously visited Gasper river congregation (an infant church then under my charge.) The doctrines of regeneration, faith, and repentance, which I uniformly preached, seemed to call the attention of the people to a serious inquiry. During the winter the question was often proposed to me, is religion a sensible thing? If I were converted would I feel it, and know it? In May, as I said before, the work began.

A woman, who had been a professor, in full communion with the church, found her old hope false and delusive—she was struck with deep conviction, and in a few days was filled with joy and peace in believing. She immediately visited her friends and relatives, from house to house, and warned them of their danger in a most solemn, faithful manner, and plead with them to repent and seek religion. This, as a mean, was accompanied with the divine blessing to the awakening of many. About this time the ears of all in that congregation seemed to be open to receive the word preached, and almost every sermon was accompanied with the power of God, to the awakening of sinners. During the summer about ten persons in the congregation were brought to Christ. In the fall of the year a general deadness seemed to creep on apace. Conviction and conversion work, in a great measure, ceased; and no visible alteration for the better took place, until the summer of 1798, at the administration of the sacrament of the supper, which was in July. On Monday the Lord graciously poured out his Spirit; a very general awakening took place—perhaps but few families in the congregation could be found who, less or more, were not struck with an awful sense of their lost estate. During the week following but few persons attended to worldly business, their attention to the business of their souls was so great. On the first Sabbath of September the sacrament was administered at Muddy river, (one of my congregations.) At this meeting the Lord graciously poured forth his Spirit, to the awakening of many careless sinners. Through these two congregations already mentioned, and through Red river, my other congregation, awakening work went on with power under every sermon. The people seemed to hear as for eternity. In every house, and almost in every company, the whole conversation with people, was about the state of their souls. About this time Rev. J. B. came here, and found a Mr. R. to join him. In a little time he involved our infant churches in confusion, disputation, &c., opposed the doctrines preached here; ridiculed the whole work of the revival; formed a considerable party, &c., &c. In a few weeks this seemed to have put a final stop to the whole work, and our infant congregation remained in a state of deadness and darkness from the fall, through the winter, and until the month of July, 1799, at the administration of the sacrament at Red river. This was a very solemn time throughout. On Monday the power of God seemed to fill the congregation; the boldest, daring sinners in the country covered their faces and wept bitterly. After the congregation was dismissed, a large number of people stayed

about the doors, unwilling to go away. Some of the ministers proposed to me to collect the people in the meeting house again, and perform prayer with them; accordingly we went in, and joined in prayer and exhortation. The mighty power of God came amongst us like a shower from the everlasting hills — God's people were quickened and comforted; yea, some of them were filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Sinners were powerfully alarmed, and some precious souls were brought to feel the pardoning love of Jesus.

At Gasper river (at this time under the care of Mr. Rankin, a precious instrument in the hand of God) the sacrament was administered in August. This was one of the days of the Son of Man, indeed, especially on Monday. I preached a plain gospel sermon on Hebrews xi, and 16. The better country. A great solemnity continued during the sermon. After sermon Mr. Rankin gave a solemn exhortation — the congregation was then dismissed; but the people all kept their seats for a considerable space, whilst awful solemnity appeared in the countenances of a large majority. Presently several persons under deep convictions broke forth into a loud outcry — many fell to the ground, lay powerless, groaning, praying, and crying for mercy. As I passed through the multitude, a woman, lying in awful distress, called me to her. Said she: "I lived in your congregation in Carolina; I was a professor, and often went to the communion; but I was deceived; I have no religion; I am going to hell." In another place an old, gray-headed man lay in an agony of distress, addressing his weeping wife and children in such language as this: "We are all going to hell together; we have lived prayerless, ungodly, lives; the work of our souls is yet to begin; we must get religion, or we will all be damned." But time would fail me to mention every instance of this kind.

At Muddy river the sacrament was administered in September. The power of God was gloriously present on this occasion. The circumstances of it are equal, if not superior to those of Gasper river. Many souls were solemnly awakened; a number, we hope, converted — whilst the people of God feasted on the hidden manna, and, with propriety, might be said to sing the new song.

But the year 1800 exceeds all that my eyes ever beheld upon earth. All that I have related is only, as it were, an introduction. Although many souls in these congregations, during the three preceding years, have been savingly converted, and now give living evidences of their union to Christ; yet all that work is only like a few drops before a mighty rain, when

compared with the wonders of Almighty grace, that took place in the year 1800.

In June the sacrament was administered at Red river. This was the greatest time we had ever seen before. On Monday multitudes were struck down under awful conviction; the cries of the distressed filled the whole house. There you might see profane swearers, and Sabbath-breakers pricked to the heart, and crying out, "what shall we do to be saved?" There frolickers and dancers crying for mercy. There you might see little children of ten, eleven, and twelve years of age, praying, and crying for redemption, in the blood of Jesus, in agonies of distress. During this sacrament, and until the Tuesday following, ten persons, we believe, were savingly brought home to Christ.

In July the sacrament was administered in Gasper river congregation. Here multitudes crowded from all parts of the country to see a strange work, from the distance of forty, fifty, and even a hundred miles; whole families came in their wagons; between twenty and thirty wagons were brought to the place, loaded with people, and their provisions, in order to encamp at the meeting house. On Friday nothing more appeared, during the day, than a decent solemnity. On Saturday matters continued in the same way, until in the evening. Two pious women were sitting together, conversing about their exercises; which conversation seemed to affect some of the by-standers; instantly the divine flame spread through the whole multitude. Presently you might have seen sinners lying powerless in every part of the house, praying and crying for mercy. Ministers and private Christians were kept busy during the night conversing with the distressed. This night a goodly number of awakened souls were delivered by sweet believing views of the glory, fullness, and sufficiency of Christ, to save to the uttermost. Amongst these were some little children—a striking proof of the religion of Jesus. Of many instances to which I have been an eye witness, I shall only mention one, viz.: a little girl. I stood by her whilst she lay across her mother's lap almost in despair. I was conversing with her when the first gleam of light broke in upon her mind—she started to her feet, and in an ecstasy of joy, she cried out, "O, he is willing, he is willing—he is come, he is come—O, what a sweet Christ he is—O, what a precious Christ he is—O, what a fullness I see in him—O, what a beauty I see in him—O, why was it that I never could believe! that I never could come to Christ before, when Christ was so willing to save me?" Then turning round, she addressed sinners, and told them of the glory, willingness and preciousness of Christ, and

plead with them to repent; and all this in language so heavenly, and, at the same time, so rational and scriptural, that I was filled with astonishment. But were I to write you every particular of this kind that I have been an eye and ear witness to, during the past two years, it would fill many sheets of paper.

At this sacrament a great many people from Cumberland, particularly from Shiloh congregation, came with great curiosity to see the work, yet prepossessed with strong prejudices against it; about five of whom, I trust, were savingly and powerfully converted before they left the place. A circumstance worthy of observation, they were sober professors in full communion. It was truly affecting to see them lying powerless, crying for mercy, and speaking to their friends and relations, in such language as this: "O, we despised the work that we heard of in *Logan*; but, O, we were deceived — I have no religion; I know now there is a reality in these things: three days ago I would have despised any person that would have behaved as I am doing now; but, O, I feel the very pains of hell in my soul." This was the language of a precious soul, just before the hour of deliverance came. When they went home, their conversation to their friends and neighbors, was the means of commencing a glorious work that has overspread all the Cumberland settlements to the conversion of hundreds of precious souls. The work continued night and day at this sacrament, whilst the vast multitude continued upon the ground until Tuesday morning. According to the best computation, we believe that forty-five souls were brought to Christ on this occasion.

Muddy river sacrament, in all its circumstances, was equal, and in some respects superior, to that at Gasper river. This sacrament was in August. We believe about fifty persons, at this time, obtained religion.

At Ridge sacrament, in Cumberland, the second Sabbath in September, about forty-five souls, we believe, obtained religion.

At Shiloh sacrament, the third Sabbath in September, about seventy persons.

At Mr. Craighead's sacrament, in October, about forty persons.

At the Clay Lick sacrament, *congregation*, in Logan county, in October, eight persons.

At Little Muddy Creek sacrament, in November, about twelve.

At Montgomery's meeting house, in Cumberland, about forty.

At Hopewell sacrament, in Cumberland, in November, about twenty persons.

To mention the circumstances of more private occasions, common days preaching, and societies, would swell a letter to a volume.

The present year has been a blessed season likewise ; yet not equal to last year in conversion work. I shall just give you a list of our sacraments, and the number, we believe, experienced religion at each, during the present year, 1801.

[My correspondent here mentions several different sacraments, held at different places, and the number that he hopes obtained true religion, at these several solemnities, amounts in all to one hundred and forty-four persons. He then proceeds:]

I would just remark that, among the great numbers in our country that professed to obtain religion, I scarcely know an instance of any that gave a comfortable ground of hope to the people of God, that they had religion, and have been admitted to the privileges of the church, that have, in any degree, disgraced their profession, or given us any ground to doubt their religion.

Were I to mention to you the rapid progress of this work, in vacant congregations, carried on by the means of a few supplies, and by praying societies — such as at Stone's river, Cedar creek, Goose creek, the Red Banks, the Forentain Head, and many other places — it would be more than time, or the bounds of a letter would admit of. Mr. McGready and myself administered the sacrament at the Red Banks, on the Ohio, about a month ago — a vacant congregation, nearly a hundred miles distant from any regular organized society, formerly a place famed for wickedness, and a perfect synagogue of Satan. I visited them twice at an early period ; Mr. R. twice, and Mr. H. once. These supplies the Lord blessed, as a means to start his work ; and their praying societies were attended with the power of God, to the conversion of almost whole families. When we administered the sacrament amongst them, they appeared to be the most blessed little society I ever saw. I ordained ten elders among them, all precious Christians ; three of whom, two years ago, were professed deists, now living monuments of Almighty grace.

The original is signed,

JAMES MCGREADY.

G.

Rev. J. P. Wilson's Letter to Mr. Hodge.

IMMEDIATELY after the adjournment of the Assembly, 1808, Rev. James P. Wilson, minister of the first Presbyterian church, in Philadelphia, wrote the following letter to Mr. Hodge:

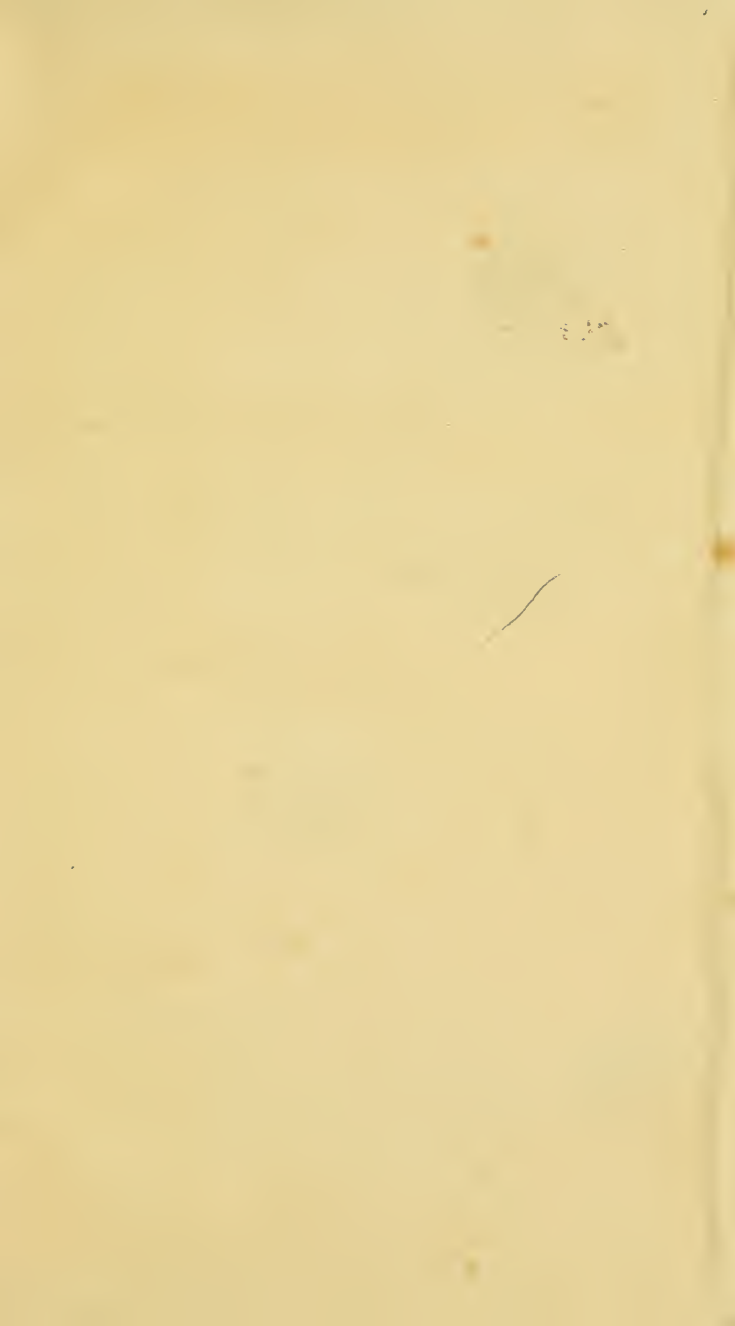
REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD. — It was chiefly with a view to your case, that I was in the Assembly this year; many of us are anxious that you and your brethren should be relieved from your embarrassing situation. The great majority of the General Assembly were entirely disposed to do every thing in your favor that would be just and proper, or that you could reasonably have wished. If the records of the Synod of Kentucky had been before us, we should without difficulty have reversed your suspension: but we had no communication from that Synod, and could not concern with them absent. Yet this cannot essentially affect you; for if the work of their Commission was without constitutional authority and wholly void, and this is the better opinion; and also if the ordinations made by you, before the dissolution of your Presbytery, were by lawful authority, you are as truly in the ministerial office (though not a Presbytery) as you can be. I am very glad to discover that you have not acted as a Presbytery; I beseech you to refrain from this, and continue as you are a little longer, and we have every reason to believe that your troubles will be ended at the next General Assembly.

But it is necessary that you should apply to the Synod of Kentucky by petition or otherwise, and desire a revision or reconsideration of their proceedings with respect to you; if they take off the suspension, you are then restored to the greater body of the visible church, received as members of the Synod, and to representation in the General Assembly; if they refuse, you can enter your appeal and forward a petition of that kind to the next General Assembly, and thus your case will be brought up in such a way as that body can, and no doubt will, give you redress. I am aware that this is a disagreeable condescension on your part, but the cause of Christ's church requires it, and he will give you grace to be and do any thing for his glory; nor is it necessary to suggest to you that calmness, much meekness and good temper will be important in the application, nor can that be an acknowledgment of the validity of the former proceedings.

We are glad to hear of the prudence, diligence, and success of the brethren you admitted. If they hold the form of sound words, and are steadfast in the faith, they will be as much beloved by the most of us, as though they had studied long and graduated. Yet our standards on the point of qualifications in future had better be adhered to; as the church will be more stable, and, if demands for ministers increase, you can set up a grammar school, and the candidates will easily acquire a sufficient knowledge of the languages whilst they are studying divinity; and thus will they not only comply with rules, but be better qualified to cope with the more subtle enemies of the gospel.

Dr. M'Knight, Dr. Hall, and myself, were a committee in your case. We wrote a letter for you, which you will see in the extracts, and one, much more plain than the last year's, to the Synod. This letter was read and disputed by paragraphs, and a great majority approved every sentence: but after all, we thought we would not send it, as it could do no good, and might exasperate some of them.





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